carbusters

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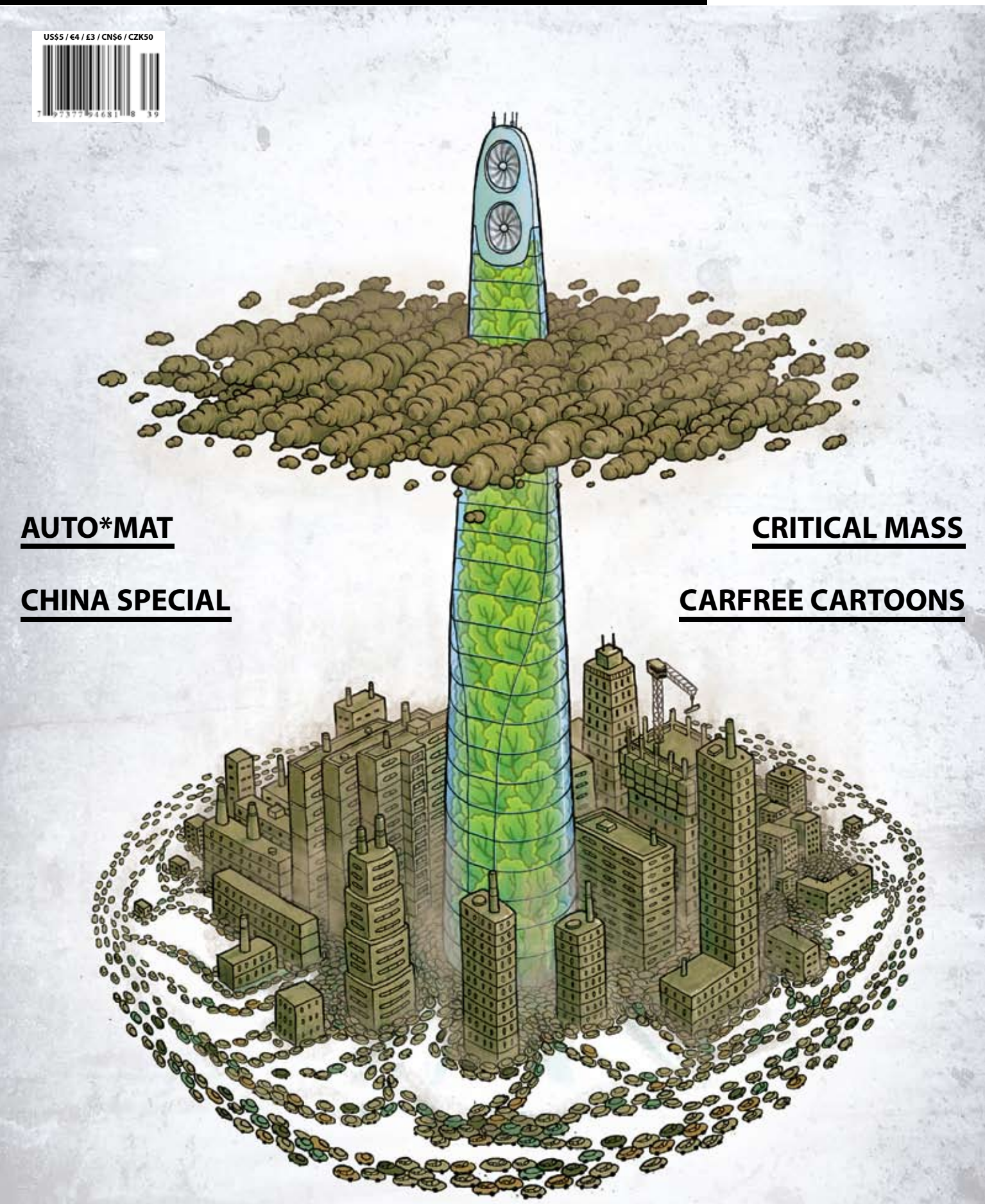

AUTO*MAT

CRITICAL MASS

CHINA SPECIAL

CARFREE CARTOONS

Changing the Outlook

What's the view from your window? Do you like what you see? Do you want to change it? As the percentage of the world's population living in cities continues to grow, the view for many can be bleak: cars, buildings, smog, and many muted colours are a common sight. What you see, hear and smell in urban areas has many negative effects – on health, on communities, on the environment – and cars are much to blame for this.

High population densities in urban areas are cause for concern. Having the worst traffic can mean the worst accidents, worst pollution, worst crowding, worst commutes and a host of other ugly conditions and experiences. Many of the most densely populated cities are in Southeast Asia. Beijing in China is an example of a city that paints a grim picture when it comes to car-dominance. However, there are glimmers of hope evident in smaller cities in China where all the elements of development and prosperity exist, but without the bleak city smog or the car clog. In this issue, Karl Fjellstrom guides us through Guangzhou, a carfree oasis and a leading model for changing cityscapes in China (page 11).

As populations grow and people move, cities develop and expand – so do the number of cars in them, moving at a faster pace – with a multitude of problems arising from this. One example is the issue of road safety. A recent report by the World Health Organisation showed the dim reality: approximately 1.3 million people die each year on the world's roads, and between 20 and 50 million sustain non-fatal injuries. The results clearly show that significantly more action is needed to make the world's roads safer. If motorists apply the brakes, this will not only change the impact on human health, but also the level of social interaction in communities. Stephen J. Watkins investigates (page 14).

Now many alternative ways to travel are on offer, which are more affordable, sustainable and better for your health. Bicycles are one. Walking is another. A popular pastime for many are Critical Mass rides, an inspiring action which helps people rethink the use of our streets and bring attention to how car-dependent societies are. We talk to Chris Carlsson, co-founder of Critical Mass, and get a glimpse into the success of the monthly movement and how it can help alter attitudes (page 20). Someone who clearly recognises the benefits of cycling is Kim Nguyen; his two-wheeled world tour is a source of inspiration for others – helping change the environment we live and the lifestyles we lead (page 15). Then we escape the city and take a scenic walk with Tim Woods, who shows us that taking a sustainable step outside of the city is an important move toward preserving and improving public transportation services (page 18).

"What's the view from your window?"

So now's about time we change the outlook – of our cities, towns and streets – let this issue be a source of inspiration for you and others: take a walk, spread the word with others on two wheels, or simply take pleasure in the artwork of carfree cartoonists. (page 16).

Jane Harding

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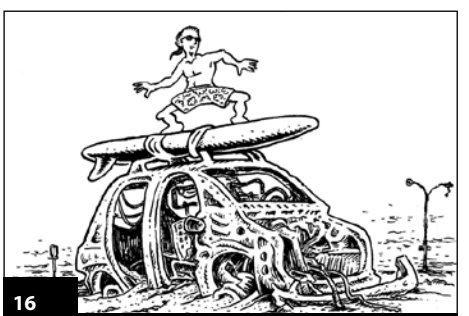

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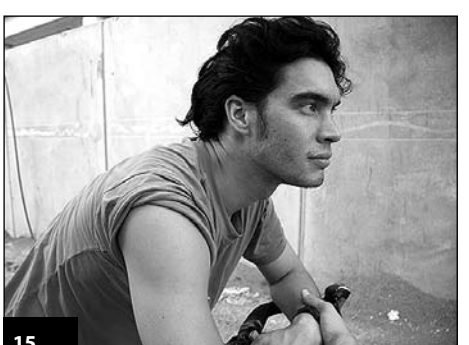

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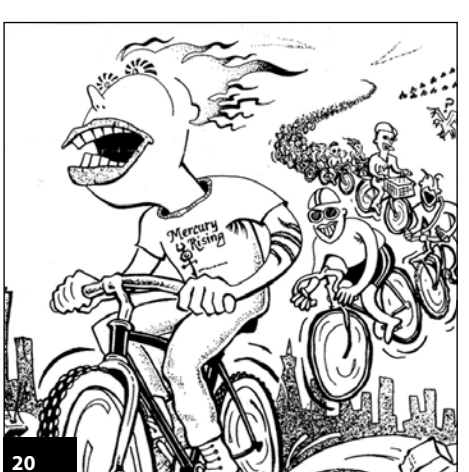

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letters

Hi guys,
I recently started a subscription to *Carbusters* and just got my first issue. I am so, so, so grateful that there are others out there who share my anti-car passion. As an atheist and non-driver, sometimes it can get a bit lonely and alienating over here in the States.

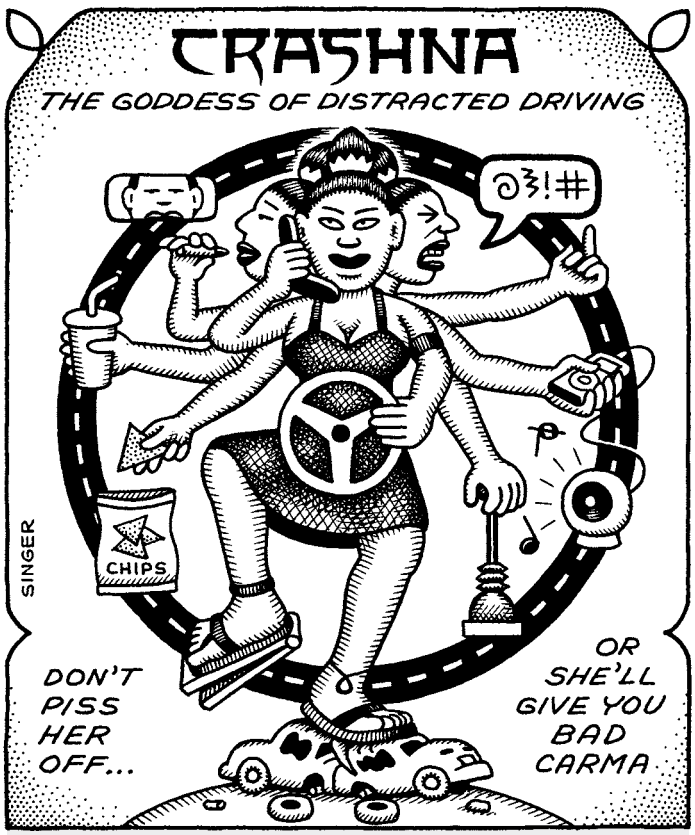
Anyway, here are a couple of pictures of my tattoos that I got about two years ago – I thought you guys, more than anyone else, would enjoy them the most. Be strong, be gentle, be loud, be quick.
Gavin H. Phill, Bellingham, WA. u.s. of Amehrika

Hello,
I want to share an interesting story. I recently ordered 130 "Driving" stickers (for placement on Stop road traffic signs) from your carfree resources. When the stickers arrived they were enclosed in a large, industrial mail sack printed with *"Czechoslovakia Posta"* and something written about the national mail service. I don't speak Czech and I wonder if this bag is old, dating from the Czechoslovakia days?

From the looks of things, the wrapping you sent the stickers in had burst open and the mail handlers had put the whole mess in this large sack tied at the top with a piece of twine. I was hosting a fundraising cocktail party that night and it made a great topic of conversation. It was fun to receive!

I donated the stickers to the owner of my local bike shop and Break The Gridlock, an organisation in Chicago working to reduce car dependency. **Todd Gee,Chicago, US**

NO EXIT **© Andy Singer**



"I just drew to memorialise the people who've almost run me over while on their phones (or texting or putting on their makeup)"
Andy Singer

Polar Bears and Chevrolet Avalanches

I haven't filled my gas tank in three months. And now the prices fall drastically.

I want them to stay high and get higher. I want ten dollars a gallon, twenty,

whatever the number is that will leave SUVs abandoned in intersections,

dealerships taking new cars back to the factory for disassembly. I want

gas stations leveled, bicycles on the interstate, kids playing football on the Sunshine Skyway.

When they're at the pump, instead of seeing numbers pour from their bank account,

I want people to imagine their roofs like rocks in a river, and fires spreading from the woods to their churches, and

birds falling from the sky in sheets like rain, so thick that they'll huddle in their closets, too scared to drive at all.

David Solomon, Florida, US

let's be blogging!

In the last issue we announced the new *Carfree Blogosphere*. We have changed the blogging platform, here is our link: **worldcarfree.wordpress.com**

World Carfree Network brings together organisations and individuals dedicated to promoting alternatives to car dependence. Member Group Profile outlines the history, latest projects and carfree activities of one member.

■ by Hynek Hanke

Auto*Mat
and Images from Prague

In Czech, the word *Automat* means a machine, maybe even an automobile. If, however, you split it in two halves, and write it like "Auto*Mat", it actually means "Check-mate for automobiles". This explanation alone would be over-simplified. We like to split the word in many other different ways and give it a whole variety of meanings.

Auto*Mat is an organisation and a movie. The movie is about the organisation, which is based in the city of Prague, Czech Republic. It also discusses the love for the automobile and the thinking of people in early 21st century Europe. The organisation is the movie. The two are inseparable. We make the movie, we watch the movie and we live the movie.

Czech newspapers have recently reported that the number of cars in our admired historical capital will soon outnumber people. Prague, with its narrow and curvy old town streets, poetic tinkering gas lamps and excellent public transport, has more cars per head than any other European capital.

Much as a consequence, Czech people generally dislike the city. What we call the "weekend peak-hour" happens every Saturday when masses of people leave the town for their countryside cottages. There are too many cars and they are everywhere: parked on streets, on pavements, in the reflection of gothic church windows, in frames on the walls in homes, and in people's heads.

In Auto*Mat, we believe in the importance of images. A pianist appears out of nowhere in the middle of a busy highway in the town centre and facing the halted traffic, on a grand piano and accompanied by a full orchestra that materialises on the pavement, he starts to play a song. The song is about a circle that's closing itself. Then he disappears and the traffic starts flowing again.

Another day, beautiful white angels wearing mouth screens appear all across the city. Some of them are helping people to cross the street. You see them smiling about something hidden in the middle of an ugly and busy intersection and you wonder, what does it all mean. Then you get home, turn on the TV and you see them again in the evening news leading a group of several thousand happy cyclists, apparently celebrating something in a city where hardly anybody cycles. The camera is rolling as they drive on a highway bridge that the communists had once tested with rows of heavy military tanks. And you wonder even more.

A heavenly sight: an Auto*Mat angel on the streets of Prague, Czech Republic

When we draw Auto*Mat on pictures, we playfully think of it as a machine which runs through the city streets, auto*matically eating the automobiles, the dirt and the banality of the space, while leaving behind trees, cycling children, high quality public spaces, outdoor cafés and places to meet. We sell these images on T-shirts to people and we also sell them to politicians and journalists.

It is a well-known story in Prague that the man who started assembling this machine died a few years ago when out on his bicycle. He had complained to the city about this particular intersection many times before, saying it was potentially deadly to cyclists and pedestrians. Did he suspect back then that he would be evidence to prove it?

The crossroad didn't change much even after this sad accident except for the reminiscent white bicycle and occasional candles. We still lobby to fix it. But there are other things that did change. There are visibly more cyclists in the streets nowadays, and under our pressure the city has finally started to systematically create provisions for bicycles. Some big projects for sustainable transportation have been undertaken to make the streets more friendly to people. Our current battle is about *Magistrala* – an expressway built right through the heart of the city by the communists 40 years ago, cutting important squares and whole neighbourhoods in half. The city wants to keep it, but we want to turn it into a city boulevard. The fate of this construction is now in the process of being decided.

But we continue to ask – what really matters? There is yet another meaning behind the way the word Auto*Mat is split in two by an asterisk, which is more subtle and not so obvious. If you think about it, automatism is the opposite of creativity. When some engineers think of traffic, they automatically think of highways. Or when we think of a street, we might automatically think of heaps of cars and ugliness. It's the asterisk in the middle of the word that breaks it into pieces. It's the pianist in the middle of the highway or the angel in the dirty intersection which undermines the whole essence of automatisms. ■

For more information: www.auto-mat.cz

All images © Auto*Mat

Absurd Driving Laws

For your entertainment, a small non-exhaustive list of absurd driving laws:

- In Utah, US, all kinds of birds have the right of way on any highways.
- In China, drivers who stop at pedestrian crossings may receive a fine or a warning under Article 40 of the Beijing Traffic Laws.
- You can't ride a camel in Nevada, US.
- In Germany, it is illegal to run out of gas on the motorway.
- In California, US, laws make it illegal to jump from a car travelling at 100km/h.
- In Denver, US, you are not allowed to drive a black car on a Sunday.
- In Switzerland, if you forget your car-keys inside the car and you leave the car open, you will be punished.
- In Alabama State, US, you cannot drive barefooted.
- In the UK it is prohibited to drive a car without sitting in the front seat.
- Danish traffic law states, "You may not start a car if anyone is under it".
- In Massachusetts, US, driving laws forbid taxi drivers to make love in the front seat of their taxi while working.
- In Kentucky, US, you will be fined if your pet molests a vehicle.
- In Thailand, you must wear a shirt while driving a car.
- In Mount Vernon, US, you're not allowed to shoot arrows or throw bricks onto any street or highway without the City Council's written consent.

www.dumblaws.com

Rhino ♥ Car

The Schoenbrunn Zoo in Vienna, Austria, organised an art-environment awareness campaign, with unexpected results. The exhibition, called "Trouble in Paradise", aims to show the consequences of our consumption and production patterns to the natural environment. One of the pieces is an old Mercedes exhibited in the enclosure of the rhinoceros, Jango. Jango was apparently thrilled to have a new mate in his pond.

Indeed, some visitors testify they saw it "giving affectionate nibbles to the car". One visitor commented that "he tried to climb on it from the back and front and galloped round his cage for 10 minutes before jumping back in the water. It was like he was trying to show off." Needless to say we have found proof that cars have a strong appeal for heavy animals.

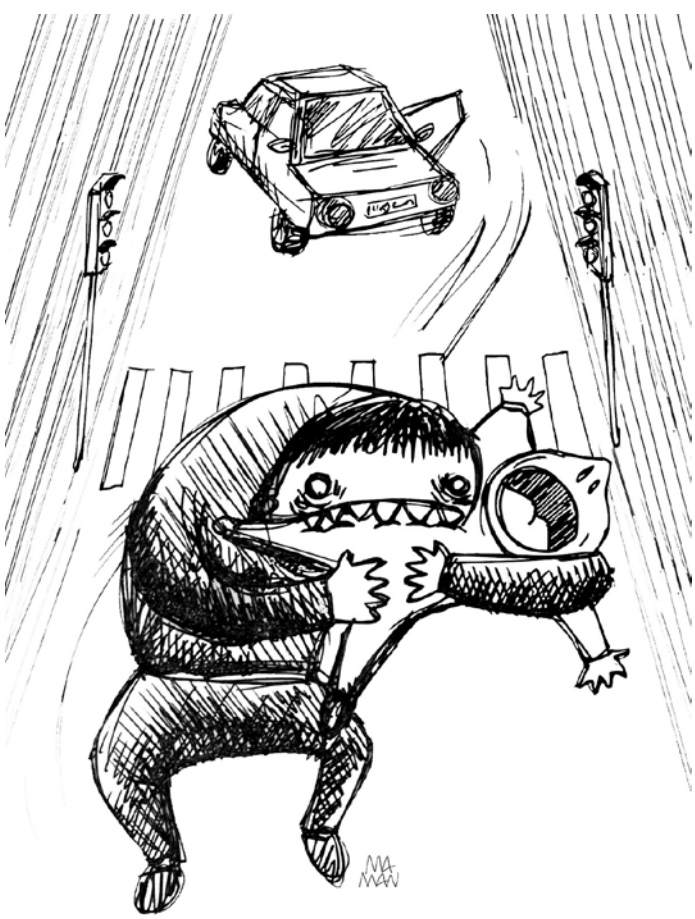
www.newsbizarre.com

True Tale of a Vampire Driver

In Romania, a driver jumped out from his car and bit a pedestrian. Yes, bit! You may think he was a descendant of some famous lineage of vampires, but no, we wouldn't make fun of such stereotypes – he bit his victim on the stomach. Besides, it was not to taste the blood of his victim, but only because the pedestrian did not cross the road fast enough. The victim, Mihai Nicoara, told police that the furious motorist leapt from his car and sunk his teeth into his belly at a crossing in Iasi. "He shouted at me and then grabbed me by the belly with his teeth. Now I have a pretty nasty wound," said Nicoara. The driver was charged with assault and Nicoara promised himself to hurry up the next time he crosses the road. "I didn't ever think I was slow at crossing the road. But drivers often beep their horns at me and I just thought they were being friendly," he said. We can thank this slow pedestrian for his positive look at life, and keep in mind to be wary of crazy drivers, some of whom even bite – and it's not a myth! **www.ananova.com**

Bump the Bumps

Please, a warm welcome for the addition of both "speed bumps" and "kinetic plates" to the never-ending list of current "green" sources of power. Based on the same idea as the old sleeping policemen, a new generation of "speed bumps" has landed on UK roads. They generate electricity as



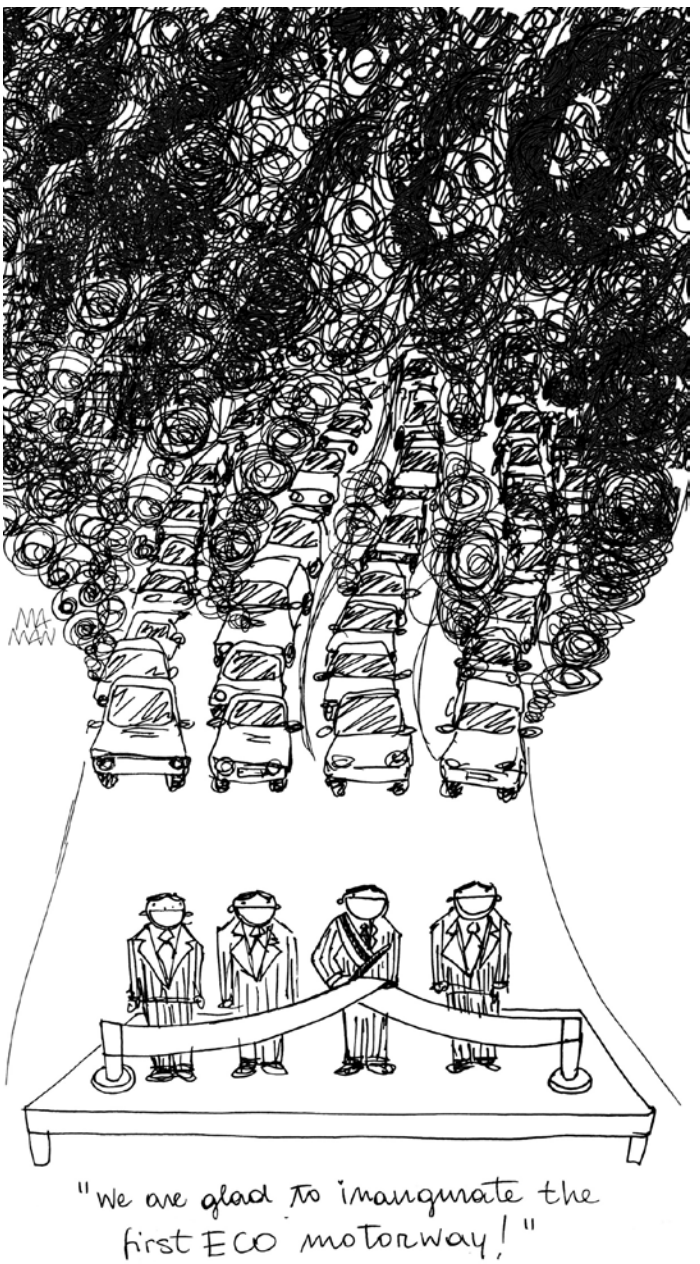
cars drive over them and are supposed to power streetlights, traffic lights and road signs. The pilot scheme, established in London, could be implemented nationwide – and it includes the use of an "electro-kinetic road ramp" system. These ramps can either be raised to act as a speed bump or laid flat, so that drivers don't realise they are passing over it.

The concept sounds very interesting, but has to be carefully considered. Indeed, some scientists have already raised the concern that the energy generated by the devices is not really totally "free". In fact, the ramps capture a tiny amount of energy from each car that passes over them, which increases each vehicle's fuel consumption by a tiny amount, and makes the green ramps petrol-powered. But perhaps we should not be so negative; after all the system appears particularly funny, especially when it is used to power petrol stations. Thanks to this "revolutionary innovation", a petrol station can now get free electricity generated by the petrol used in cars that buy petrol from the petrol station. Genius!
www.guardian.co.uk

Eco-Pollution

Anything can be "green" nowadays or at least that is what many industries and decision-makers will tell you, in order to prevent real changes and keep business running as usual. Hence, it is not surprising to learn that an "eco-motorway" (label created by Vinci, the company that built the motorway) opened in June in France. During its inauguration, Dominique Bussereau, Secretary of State for Transport – that belongs to the French Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development – was happy to underline "the quality of the motorway's integration in the environment".

Vinci shares the satisfaction of the Secretary of State and celebrates the opening of a "new era in motorways construction". It is indeed very good news for the world's biggest private operator of motorway concessions that motorways can be labelled eco-friendly. Media played their usual role, since they portrayed the project in a very informative way – as the motorway of "responsibility", "safety" and "conviviality"; "it respects the environment". One thing we can definitely agree upon is that this new concept will enforce new "sustainable" ways of polluting. **www.arcour-a19.com**



CO2 for Sale

The development of carbon markets is a very fashionable idea among decisions-makers as a method to reduce CO2 emissions, but many insist that this idea essentially allows rich countries and companies to buy the right to continue polluting. An "innovator" from Minnesota, US, decided to make some money from those who believe in carbon offsetting, and took the concept to eBay.

Thanks to him, you can now buy, for just US$100, a year and a half's worth of automotive carbon offsets, allowing you to continue driving in the knowledge that someone else has not driven for an entire year and a half. We neither know if this is legal or not, nor if the "carbon offset" found a purchaser, but we can only wonder if others will follow this initiative, and if private people will also be able to buy their "right to pollute". The biggest concern is that this method of dealing with CO2 emissions from transportation may unfortunately only cultivate the feeling that there is no limit to polluting, until you pay for it.
www.treehugger.com

Carhenge Oddity

In the future, people may regard the age of the car as a primitive era when humans were working increasingly hard to destroy their environment. They will probably have the opportunity to see many of the car cemeteries spread over the five continents, and may even have the chance to visit Carhenge, in Western Nebraska, US. This is a duplicate of Stonehenge made with cars by Jim Reinders – a farmer from the town of Alliance who accomplished this work in 1987, as a memorial to his dad.

Since its creation, the place has attracted around 80,000 tourists per year from all over the world and the association "Friends of Carhenge" has been created to support and preserve the "site". Additional sculptures have been erected in its surroundings, known as the Car Art Reserve. This odd reproduction of Stonehenge is a very powerful image combining the fascination for the original stone circle and for the car.

Maybe in the far future, people will look at it with astonishment and silent respect – trying to understand what kind of belief made us sacrifice so many resources for this destructive steel divinity.
www.carhenge.com

A Great Stretch of Responsibility

It's now official: our politicians have decided to change the world and adopt more socially and environmentally responsible behaviour. The proof: during the UNFCCC conference in Copenhagen this December, the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs will buy 3,000 litres of a new generation of biofuel (one more). This new generation is made from plant waste, instead of crops, and should produce less CO2.

The fuel will be used to power a "green" limousine that will bring state leaders to the conference. So, a round of applause! We must congratulate them for this great gesture. Of course, some weird environmentalist-type people would argue that big cars like limousines belong to the past – as they promote an unsustainable way of thinking and living.

Some others might comment that we need to be careful with all of these silver-bullet technological revolutions that usually end up keeping business as usual. But we should be reasonable and applause the introduction of the green limousine as a great step towards a better world.
www.treehugger.com

action!

"All problems become smaller if you don't dodge them but confront them" William F. Halsey

images © **Kim Shephard-Thorn**

images © up: **Erin O'Melinn** down: **Ken Ohrn**, Cypress Digital

Getacross the Bridge

During May, around 5,000 people on foot, roller blades, skateboards, unicycles and bicycles, streamed past a police roadblock onto the iconic Harbour Bridge in Auckland, New Zealand. They were celebrating the 50th birthday of a structure upon which many people had never before set foot. Since its opening in 1959, the bridge has been off-limits to pedestrians, apart from an annual marathon. Those living on the opposite side to their work are forced to drive the short distance in congested lanes or take often inadequate public transport.

Getacross, a network of walking and cycling advocacy groups, has been lobbying for several years to remedy this. They garnered support from local and regional councils to enter the bridge, but the New Zealand Transport Authority that operates the bridge opposed the idea on the grounds that it was unsafe and too expensive. But the group, wanting more immediate change, took to their bicycles one morning to cross the bridge, zooming past cars and gathering ecstatic cheers from the nearby crowds. At the highest point on the bridge, someone chalked on the words "Our Bridge!" Although traffic was brought to a standstill, the event turned into more of a celebration than a protest, with thousands of people enjoying the friendly atmosphere and spectacular harbour views on offer. The actions of the cyclists brought plenty of media attention to the fight for the liberation of the bridge.

Sally McAra
www.getacross.org.nz

Bring the Bike to Work

This year's Bike to Work Week (BTWW) in Metro Vancouver, Canada, was a huge success with 5,000 cyclists registering and participating during May. Each day of the week, commuter celebration stations were set up along bike routes to offer free food, prizes and mechanical help. Committed participants pedalled through the week and thousands of people celebrated their accomplishments at a wrap-up party in downtown Vancouver. The party included food for cyclists, pedal-powered music and a performance by the B:C:Clettes, an all lady, bike inspired, street-performance collective (see *Carbusters* #36).

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition organised BTWW with the aim of drawing new people out to use bikes as daily transportation and inspiring them to continue year round. In total, 920 employees biked to work for the very first time and post-event surveys show that many of them are still cycle commuting. One participant said, "I'd wanted to try cycling to work for the past two years and just never managed to get started. Bike to Work Week gave me the push I needed to finally try it – and I love it! I've biked to work nearly every day since. The feeling of community the commuter stations created was great."

Overall, participants logged nearly 200,000km during the week and saved 37,000kg of greenhouse gases from being emitted into the atmosphere. The next BTWW will be held in November 2009, to demonstrate the viability of cycling year round in Vancouver.

Erin O'Melinn, www.vacc.bc.ca

images © **www.planka.nu**

images © **www.passeiolivre.blogspot.com**

There are no Green Cars!

To celebrate World Environment Day 2009, the Swedish commuter organisation Planka.nu hosted a "Climate Crash" together with Friends of the Earth Sweden and Klimax, a network of groups that uses direct action to raise awareness of the threat that climate change poses. Over 150 people took to the streets of Stockholm on a chilly June evening and closed down Hornsgatan, one of the most polluted roads in Sweden (and in the EU). For more than one hour all car traffic was blocked by people listening to music, dressing up as polar bears, drinking coffee, bicycling and carrying banners with the main messages: "There are no green cars" and "Adapt the production – sink the car-industry".

During the last years there have been Climate Crashes all over Sweden, with the biggest one taking place at the European Social Forum in Malmö with over a 1,000 participants. Even though every Climate Crash has its own theme, the overall goal is to reduce C02 emissions from the transport sector and to clean our city centres from cars.

Planka.nu is a network of Swedish groups working for free public transport and a climate-smart and just city planning. For instance, it organises fare-dodgers in the insurance fund "p-kassan" where members pay each others' fines if they get caught fare-dodging on public transport. They also run an online forum www.freepublictransports.com which focuses on the international free public transport movement.

Alexander Berthelsen
www.planka.nu

Sticking to the Streets

Passeio Livre (Portuguese for Clear Sidewalk) is an organisation that evolved from the growing realisation of how feeble respect towards pedestrian mobility is and the need to react against the cultural acceptance of abusive car parking, as well as the apathy of policy makers and authorities to do anything about it. A group of pedestrian advocates in Lisbon gathered to organise a response to balance this problem common to all major cities in Portugal. The purpose was to empower abused pedestrians and to make visible and challenge the sense of impunity amongst brazen car drivers.

In March, the group printed 15,000 stickers with the slogan "Don't just think about your Navel" (Portuguese for don't be so self-centred), to express dissatisfaction towards abusively parked automobiles and promote respect for pedestrians. The stickers were mailed to *Passeio Livre* members and others interested. There was wide interest all over Portugal and hundreds of requests for stickers, including some from as far as Brazil. By June, all stickers had been given away, while by July, following a design contest for new stickers, 20,000 new ones were printed in four different designs and are ready for distribution.

The popularity of the stickers exceeded all expectations; there was wide media coverage and a blog created to document this action, which has been a huge success in raising public awareness of an important issue. Gradually, parking attitudes are changing.

Tiago Carvalho,
passeiolivre.blogspot.com

San Luis Potosi

Paving the way in Mexico ■ by Agustin G. Villegas Villarreal

San Luis Potosi (SLP) is the capital city of the homonymous state located in the central-northern part of Mexico. The city, founded in 1592, was originally composed of seven districts (*barrios* in Spanish) each with their own churches and gardens. In the past the city was known as the "Gardens City" because of its many green and beautiful areas.

Nowadays, SLP is an industrial and commercial city. Since 1994 the city and state administration have focused on supporting the car industry, and perceiving the car as the primary means of transportation. There is an industrial zone with a large car-manufacturing cluster, which includes a General Motors factory. The downtown area is mainly comprised of modern, sprawling residential and industrial developments, all encircled with very large and wide highways, which are generally congested with cars. However, among the sprawl of modern development, there are two bicycle factories that produce more than 50% of bicycles in Mexico.

Carfree Core

Despite a strong industrial and commercial presence, especially of the car industry, the city is not as car-infested as appears at first glance. Walking is the main way to get around in the historical centre of the city. The well-preserved historic downtown of the city is characterised by a maze of narrow cobblestone streets connecting large plazas, bordered by large churches, trees and fountains.

There have been a number of recent carfree conversions in the city, most of which were done in the historic centre in order to help it gain the UNESCO World Heritage status. Many areas in the city centre have been designed for people and social interaction – offering an exceptionally friendly place where teenagers congregate, couples stroll and street performers attract large crowds.

Today the Pedestrian Mall, located in the heart of the historic centre, is regarded as one of the most important carfree developments in the city and indeed the country. The Pedestrian Mall is a walk-only zone and popular social and shopping area – a place where you can see, smell and buy food, and enjoy the colourful array of clothes – that is both desirable and important for people, the environment, as well as the economy. It is a popular place to meet people, as well as to discover religious buildings and admired architecture such as the *del porfiriato* houses built just before the Mexican revolution in the 20th century.

The Pedestrian Mall is approximately 4.7km in length: 1.7km of which was originally carfree, and 3.0km of which was made carfree after 1973. The basic design is a north-south axis, which joins two previously existing pedestrian areas: the Avenue Juarez and the Garden Hidalgo. Garden Hidalgo was redesigned to be carfree in 1990. This conversion was achieved after the mayor and engineer Guillermo Pizzuto Zamanillo fought against the huge amount of pollution generated by cars every day.

Setting the Standard

SLP has undergone a rapid pedestrianisation, especially in the downtown area; achieved by successful developments including the Pedestrian Mall, which have re-energised the city and helped reactivate the local economy. Many new shops, cafés, restaurants and hotels opened, profiting from these carfree surroundings.

The city is now considered as a pioneer for carfree conversions in Mexico. Now there are hopes that other cities will follow SLP's example and continue to develop carfree areas, infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians, and to improve public transportation in order to keep building a better life for their citizens. ■

For more information: bicicleteros.wordpress.com

Photo © Agustin G. Villegas Villarreal

SLP in Numbers

Population: 670,532 inhabitants **Size of SLP:** 385km²
Total km of cycling routes: 24km
Total km of pedestrian streets in the centre: 5.5km

World Carfree Days in SLP

State Congressman Javier Algara Cossio organised the first World Carfree Day in 2001. Year after year the carfree celebrations have grown and new organisations join in. Bicycle advocacy groups, schools and local authorities join forces to organise successful events every September 22nd.

There are now several carfree days, demonstrations, *Ciclovias*, as well as other carfree events happening throughout the year and organised by different groups: from youth organisations to anarchists. All follow the same aim: to promote alternatives such as walking, biking, and public transport – and all promote an end to car dependency.

■ **by Karl Fjellstrom**

Guangzhou and a Glimpse into the Future

Changing China

Models of high-density, largely carfree urban development are being achieved without fanfare in Guangzhou, China. This is an updated and edited version of the article* Sustainable China *by Karl Fjellstrom. He takes us on a tour through a place which is setting the standard for sustainable transportation and liveability in towns and cities across this rapidly developing nation. Here we see that elements of globalisation – industrialisation, consumption, population growth, and mass-movement of people – can be successfully balanced to create places with sustainability, liveability, sociability and profitability.

Millions of people in Chinese cities are witnessing a dramatic improvement in the quality of their housing, offices, and where they eat and shop. But what will happen to city liveability, traffic congestion, global oil consumption and climate change as more cities tear down once vibrant pedestrian and bicycle-oriented urban districts and replace them with the new, automobile-oriented residential and office towers that seem to be rising overnight along Beijing's major arterials? Many experts combine a dim prognosis with a search for solutions from Europe and other international good practice locations.

Yet Guangzhou, the capital of the southern Guangdong province with 13 million inhabitants, shows that the search for solutions can be closer to home. If city planners can learn to facilitate rather than obstruct the kinds of positive revitalisation trends already taking place, while developers and designers can learn to reinvent the positive characteristics of more traditional communities in new real estate developments, Chinese cities will be well on the way to a sustainable future.

Models of sustainable transportation are being achieved across the city – in the historical core, socialist-era housing areas, urban villages, and some of the new developments. The common characteristics of each area include high density, extremely low car ownership and usage, attractive streetscapes, blocks broken up into pedestrianised walkways and streets, and an overwhelming reliance on walking, cycling and public transport. Finally, there are two "life-support" measures for these largely carfree areas: the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project and high parking costs.

Historic Core

Guangzhou's historic core, continuously inhabited for 2,200 years, is typified by the Xiguan area of Liwan District, where the historic continuity of the city is immediately perceptible. Today, the area faces pressure for redevelopment. Office, retail, and residential towers sprout up wherever there is space, though in Guangzhou the city centre developments tend to use more of a plot-by-plot rather than a *tabula rasa* demolition approach. The result, when it is done well, is ongoing densification and gradual renewal resulting in a diverse mix of building ages that helps retain the rich urban fabric.

Despite the frenetic development, cars account for less than 1% of trips in Xiguan. One reason why car use is so low is the lack of space for driving and parking. Of the estimated 274 street segments and alleys in a 0.7km² area in Xiguan, fewer than a dozen are accessible to cars. The rest constitute a dense and intricate network of pedestrian alleyways, rich in cultural, commercial, architectural and social features.

Socialist-Era Housing Areas

Several districts of Guangzhou are upgrading public spaces and walkways, and installing ground-level shops in previously walled-off apartments built primarily in the 1980s and 1990s. The result is a largely pedestrianised urban milieu in the carfree urban oases

described following. The main opposition to this carfree urban revitalisation has come from city planning officials, who object to the change in use of the ground-level apartments from residential to commercial space.

The Jingtai Jie Street Committee of Guangyuan New Village has together with local residents transformed the area into one of the most liveable parts of the city. When the area was first built up in the 1980s, developers did not attend adequately to corresponding infrastructure outside the buildings, such as pavement, public space, sewer lines, and water, which left many festering problems. The Committee took over management of these elements, and in the past couple of years has made many improvements, including installing high curbs to prevent illegal parking and restricting car parking; building trees and seating into improved walkways; narrowing roads and intersections; widening walkways and building several parks; and allowing cycle rickshaws to replace motorcycle taxis.

" The 'dream' of car ownership quickly morphs into a nightmare"

Another example of carfree development is the West Jiangnan area of Haizhu District, where there is an extensive pedestrian- and bicycle-only network. The inhabitants, mostly Cantonese, enjoy their daily routines in clean and quiet neighbourhoods, free of the stress, hazards and noise of cars and trucks. In March 2009, a meeting of related street committees, the district government and the city construction bureau took the pedestrian-oriented development trends a step further, proposing that the area's main traffic artery would in future be fully pedestrianised. In July, local media reported that these plans had been approved, construction would start in September, and be finished by the end of the year, ready for the Asian Games held in Guangzhou in late 2010.

Urban Villages

Guangzhou's 138 "urban villages" are overbuilt, extremely dense areas of informal housing formed when farmland surrounding an agricultural village was converted to urban use and absorbed into the expanding city. The erstwhile villagers are now wealth absentee landlords, with villages occupied by migrants from other cities. Housing conditions are crowded and often unpleasant, but the villages nevertheless have some positive characteristics. Car ownership is virtually non-existent, because cars cannot enter the narrow streets. And since a citywide ban on motorcycles came into effect in January 2007, the street-life in the labyrinthine alleyways has become even more vibrant.

Most needs are met within walking distance, and the presence of the urban villages even in the city centre provides proximity to formal employment. For longer distance trips, inhabitants rely on buses. Two dozen urban villages line Guangzhou's 23km BRT corridor (which is currently under construction), with village residents forming the bulk of the system's passenger base. Bicycles are also an important transport mode in the urban villages.

There have been efforts to improve the living environment of urban village residents; demolishing some buildings to install parks, cleaning up waterways, and installing better security for the housing units. The positive side of poor housing conditions is that residents spend a lot of time on the streets, which makes for lively streetscapes and lots of neighbourhood interaction. Combined with the intricate networks of alleyways and continually changing impact on senses of sight, smell, and hearing, the urban villages provide a stimulating and attractive walking and social environment, and a unique transit-oriented form of development.

New Developments

As in other Chinese cities, Guangzhou's newer high-rise apartment developments contribute to a sterile streetscape, facilitate automobile use, and penalise those on foot. Yet some provide a more positive model.

Junjing Huayuan, which opened in 1997, includes ground-level shops, free public pedestrian access (with controlled vehicle access), pedestrianised internal streets and 10,000 apartments, but with only 3,500 parking spaces. However, city planning officials are insisting on a higher provision of parking spaces in new developments and planning an expansion of 50,000 parking spaces in the city centre by 2010. The desired parking level of one space per apartment is not high by

international standards, but in the context of Guangzhou's urban density and limited road network, it is a recipe for gridlock.

Guangzhou has many models of high-density, sustainable urban development. District and sub-district government offices are at the forefront of moves by communities to take control of their living environment, revitalising the building stock, upgrading streets and public spaces, and restricting car access and parking. Often, such measures are opposed by higher-level planning officials.

Bus Rapid Transit System

The different kinds of neighbourhoods in Guangzhou, rely almost wholly on buses for longer trips, and the city has some of the world's highest bus passenger flows. Bus speeds, however, are declining: now down to 11km/h or slower on many main roads. The new BRT system will remedy the problem of low bus speeds and greatly improve conditions for bus passengers.

Guangzhou's new BRT corridor will transport more than 23,000 passengers per hour when it opens in mid-February 2010; more than triple the capacity of any other BRT system in Asia and the second largest in the world after Bogota, Colombia. At a cost of US$6 million per km, the BRT is 10 times cheaper than a subway. Walking still makes up 40% of all trips, but in a city where a third of trips are by bus, the BRT will significantly reduce travel times, saving more than 40 million passenger-hours annually. The BRT corridor is the first road built in over a decade with continuous segregated bike lanes, and the BRT stations will include bike parking and bike sharing facilities.

Parking: Expensive and in Short Supply

One of the main reasons car use is so low is the low availability and high cost of parking. The ratio of new apartments to parking spaces of around 3:1 for newer areas in the periphery often exceeds 8:1 in built-up areas, so availability of parking spaces is low. Meanwhile monthly parking charges are capped at 400 yuan (US$60), so developers prefer to sell rather than rent out the parking spaces.

Without one's own parking space at home and work, and with so little available on-street parking, the "dream" of car ownership quickly morphs into a nightmare.

Other Chinese Cities

Guangzhou's sub-district, local level improvements and BRT system are all oriented toward improving conditions for the large majority of city-dwellers in any Chinese city. Harbin in the far north has a nearly identical travel mode share for buses, bicycles, and pedestrians as Guangzhou. Cities such as Changzhou in the Yangtze River delta still feature more than half of all trips by bicycle.

In nearly all Chinese cities, cars still account for less than 10% of all trips. For this reason, the measures which are being taken in Guangzhou are not interesting curiosities with niche applications in selected neighbourhoods. Rather, they could form the core of a sustainable transportation policy for all Chinese cities to follow.

Bike Sharing in Hangzhou

Hangzhou, 160km southwest of Shanghai, has for years prioritised car travel over all other modes. The city's famous West Lake is lined with international brand-name shops, high speed roads and even luxury car dealerships. Cars park and drive on walkways throughout the city. Yet amid the negative trends are green shoots of hope for a more sustainable future.

Opening in October 2008, Hangzhou now has a bike sharing programme with more than 25,000 bicycles and a dense network coverage of 800 stations; both projected to double by the end of 2009. The system is averaging more than 70,000 smart-card activated bike rentals per day. Stations are being rolled out rapidly, and high quality internet information and maps are provided, unlike the less successful recent experience with bike sharing programmes in Beijing. Hangzhou has also made bold improvements in other areas, improving upon an initially problematic BRT system, installing bollards to protect pedestrians, and expanding an innovative scheme to shelter cyclists from weather at intersections.

What's the Recipe for Success?

Thanks to a mix of modern and old, good planning, and respect for existing public transport and urban design the city remains not car-orientated. The city has many local initiatives which deserve recognition, study and adaptive imitation in new developments in Guangzhou and other Chinese cities. ■

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For more information: www.itdp-china.org
All pictures © Karl Fjellstrom

Hit the Brakes!

■ **by Stephen J. Watkins**

The human race was built for walking speed and running speed, not driving speed. Speed is indeed a problem causing countless accidents worldwide. Another problem is the number of motorists taking to the fast lane causing heavy traffic and clogging up our streets. Stephen J. Watkins examines the impacts of speed and heavy traffic, which not only cause accidents and damage health, but can lead to a social breakdown in communities. Clearly it's time to kick the car habit...

In a collision between a car and a pedestrian at 60km/h the pedestrian has a 90% chance of being killed. Slow the car to 50km/h and the pedestrian fatality rate falls to 50%. Slow further to 30km/h and the pedestrian has a 90% prospect of survival. It would therefore save lives if drivers adopted a safer driving style and one that is slowed down to 30km/h when they leave the main road and enter side streets.

Most drivers start their journeys in a side street, make their way to the main road, travel there until close to their destination, and then enter the street system again. Few places are more than a kilometre from the main road. It follows that few journeys involve more than three kilometres in side streets. The difference between travelling three kilometres at 60km/h and travelling the same distance at 30km/h is three minutes. So we are killing our children for three minutes off our journeys.

This is a powerful argument for people voluntarily adopting this mode of driving and also for a universal speed limit of 30km/h, except on those roads where a higher speed limit is adopted. The message that we shouldn't kill children to shorten our journeys by three minutes is one that most human beings would readily accept. Why then are cars regularly driven in side streets at more than 30km/h by large numbers of otherwise rational, polite and non-violent individuals?

Firstly, it is because the message has not been widely promoted. The 30km/h message and the three minutes message have been promoted in a half-hearted way and are rarely promulgated in official statements. Secondly, it is because we do not distinguish between streets and roads. A street is just another road made for cars and people who leave traffic jams to enter the street system often accelerate as they see an open road before them.

Slowing the Streets

We have to change this concept of speeding. We have to change it for road safety. We also have to change the number of cars on the road because of the impact it has on communities. Some years ago in San Francisco, US, Appleyard and Lintell studied the impact of street traffic on social networks[1]. They compared the number of neighbours that people acknowledged as social contacts in three streets that were very similar except that one was lightly trafficked, one moderately trafficked and one heavily trafficked. In the lightly trafficked street people had webs of social contacts extending along and across the street for some distance. In moderately trafficked streets the contacts extended along the street but not across it – so the network was halved. In heavily trafficked streets people had contacts only with their next-door neighbour (if that). This research has now been repeated in the UK – last year Joshua Hart obtained similar findings in Bristol (see *Carbusters* #36)[2].

Does this matter? Social support is now recognised as one of the most important predictors of good health, probably through its effect on minimising the impact of stress. The Alameda County Study showed a fourfold difference in total mortality between the least and most socially networked groups[3]. Because this association got stronger rather than weaker over time, it was probably causal rather than an indirect effect of, say, sick people giving up social activity. So if cars in streets are damaging our social networks – literally causing us to have fewer friends – then they are probably killing more people that way than they are through crashes.

"We are killing our children for three minutes off our journeys"

It isn't just health either. Another finding of Hart's work was that heavy traffic seriously reduced the areas of the street over which people felt any proprietary concern. The solution is to change the street into a place which people feel proud to maintain and a place that is designed for social interaction – filled with gardens and trees and areas to sit and talk and play. Cars can still be allowed, but the carriageway can become just the gap between the obstacles. Parking areas can still be marked out – in fact they can be placed across the carriageway so that they add to the obstacles. Such streets have been developed in Holland – they are called *"woonerfen"* or "living streets". We need them everywhere. It is time to take back the gaps between our houses and make them safe for our children and part of our personal space. The car roams our streets like a dangerous but much-loved dog. It needs to be on a leash. It probably also needs to be rather less loved – but that's another issue. ■

Stephen J. Watkins is Director of Public Health for Stockport and Chair, Transport and Health Study Group in the UK.

[1]Appleyard, D., Lintell, M., The environmental quality of city streets: The residents' viewpoint, *American Institute of Planners Journal,* 38, March 1972.

[2]Hart J., Driven to Excess: Impacts of Motor Vehicle Traffic on Residential Quality of Life in Bristol, UK, *MSc Transport Planning dissertation*, UWE, April 2008.

[3]Berkman L.F., Syme S.L., Social Networks, Host Resistance and Mortality: a Nine Year Follow Up of Alameda County Residents, *Am J Epidemiol,* 109:2, February 1979.

Pedalling Lightly **on the Earth**

Interview with Kim Nguyen by Marko Thull

***Kim Nguyen** took to the road on his bicycle on August 10, 2008 aiming to reach Copenhagen in time for the UNFCCC conference in December. From Brisbane, Australia to Copenhagen, Denmark his journey will cover around 25,000km across varying landscapes as part of the **Ride Planet Earth** event promoting sustainable transport and travel to combat climate change. After a year and a half on his bike, he hopes to raise awareness about environmental issues and show that everybody can take action and change their way of life. Kim took the time while passing through Mongolia to talk to us about his inspiring trip.*

What led you to undertake this ride?
I'm passionate about travel and about the environment. When I heard about the negotiations taking place in Copenhagen, I thought it was the perfect way to combine these passions. This journey allows me to see the world, take action on climate change and travel in a sustainable way.

It must be pretty tough at times, what keeps you going?
There are some very hard days. Mongolia has been very hard. There are no roads, a lot of sand, a lot of wind and not many places to buy food and water. I even think about quitting from time to time when it gets very tough. What keeps me going is the belief that: by cycling from Australia to Denmark, I can encourage others to change their behaviour and choose sustainable options. I want to motivate people to change by highlighting the impact climate change has on the most vulnerable communities in the world, like the nomads in Mongolia.

How do people you meet react towards your challenging journey?
Reactions vary almost as much as people. Many people just shake their head and think I am crazy. Sometimes people stare at me in bewilderment, sometimes wave and smile in support. The journey I'm taking is so out of the ordinary that some people just cannot understand it.

What impact do you think your journey will have on yourself and the planet?
The journey will undoubtedly have an incredible impact on me. For the planet, it really depends. I put a lot of work into publicising sustainable transport and travel and encourage people to look at their behaviour and think about its impacts. So far almost 250 people have joined the Ride Planet Earth Challenge to cut their car use. I hope by the time I reach Copenhagen there will be many more people joining and therefore many more cars off the road. But we will have to wait and see. All I can do is keep cycling and keep trying.

The big event on December 5 can have a greater impact. Cyclists around the world will join the ride and start "Cycle Change" to tackle climate change. We currently have about 12 events planned across five continents.

How will you measure the success of your ride?
By the number of participants on the ride – the more there are, the more successful it will be. Obviously I hope that the outcome of the negotiations in Copenhagen will be satisfactory. I think this project helps put pressure on governments to take action, it will not be decisive. But I want to start change whether or not governments do, and that change can be measured directly.

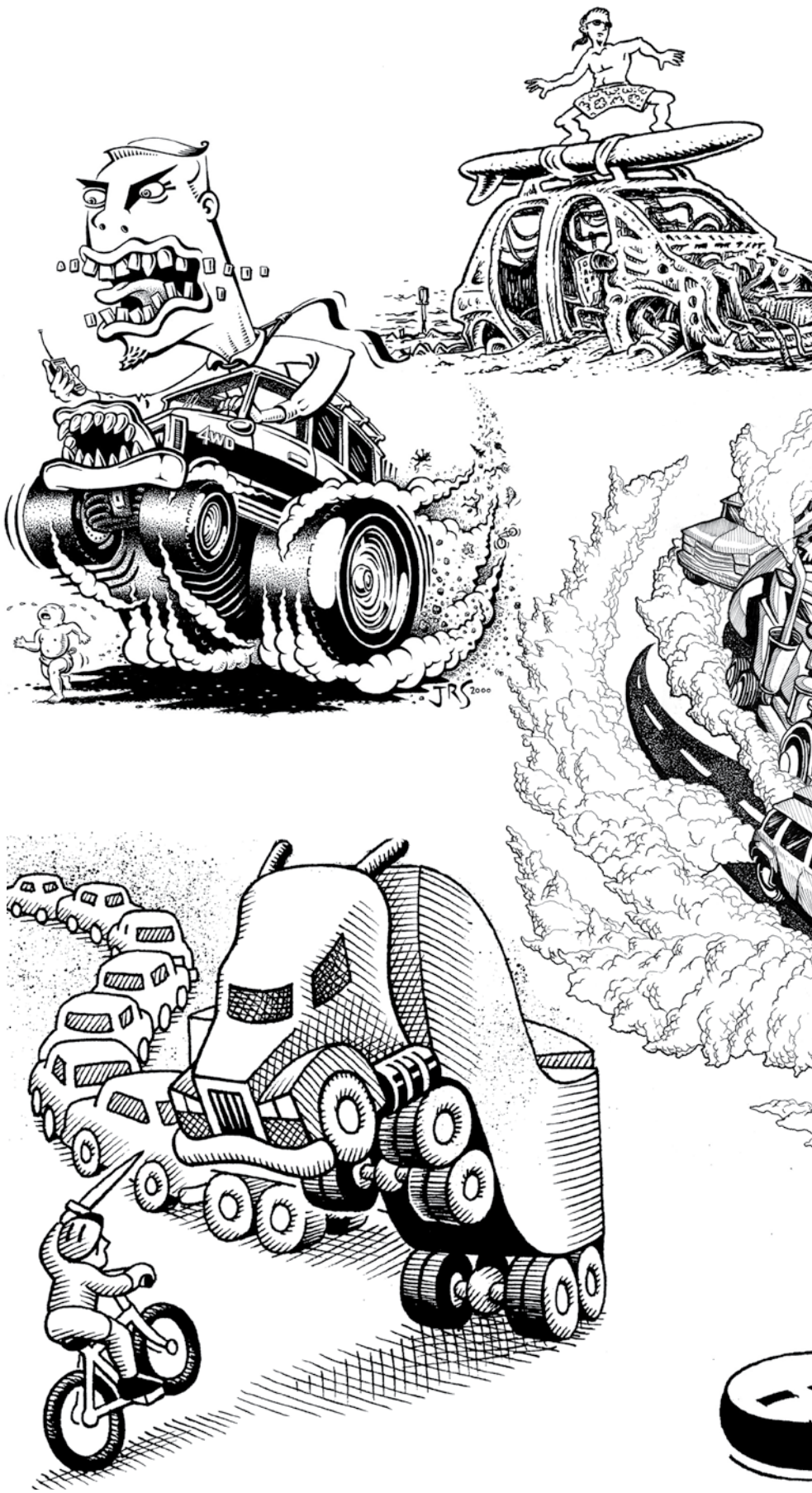
What are your thoughts on the future of cars?
I think that with action, dirty petrol-powered cars will be out. But when this will happen is up to the amount and success of actions that will be taken. Individuals and governments need to understand that using cars the way our society has been doing is no longer possible. We have to start using the alternatives. In some countries this is already happening. For instance, electric bicycles are very popular in China, because people can simply not afford to run petrol-powered cars. Of course this change must go hand in hand with a change to renewable energy sources. If these things happen, there is a future for cars. If not, we are in trouble. But it will be hard to change people's mind, especially in places like Australia, where I'm from – people there consider their car as a main symbol of success and accomplishment. It is very hard to get them to think differently.

Any last comments for our carfree readers?
Get out on your bikes, on your skateboards, roller-skates, pogo sticks, running shoes, and sail boats and explore the world. Just make sure you don't destroy it while doing so, by exploring it in your Hummer. ■

For more information, please visit www.rideplanetearth.org
All images © Kim Nguyen

celebration of

Carfree Cartoo



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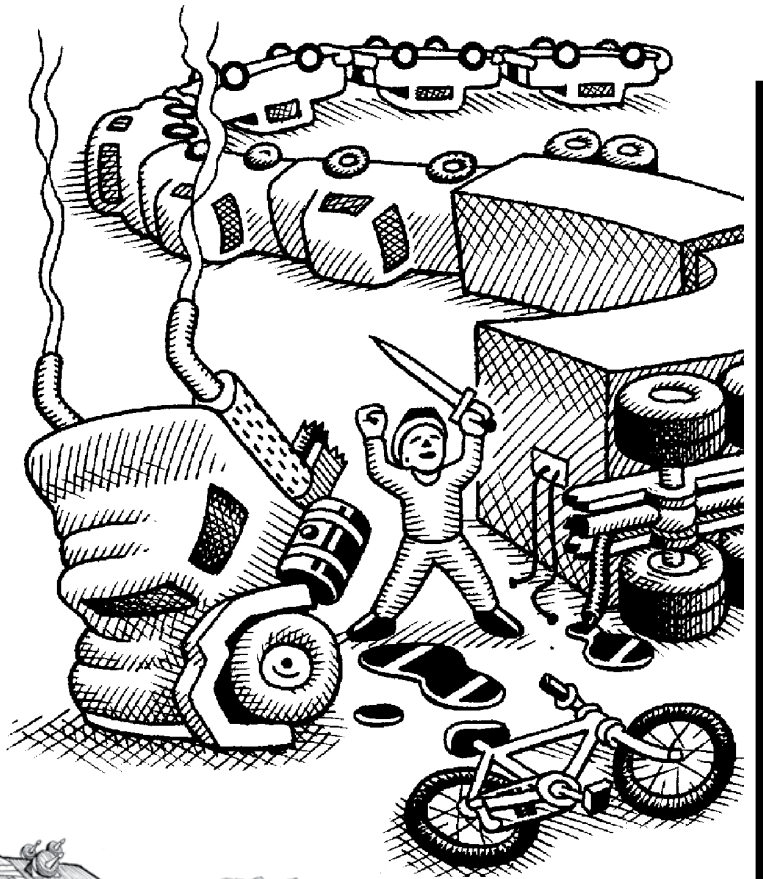

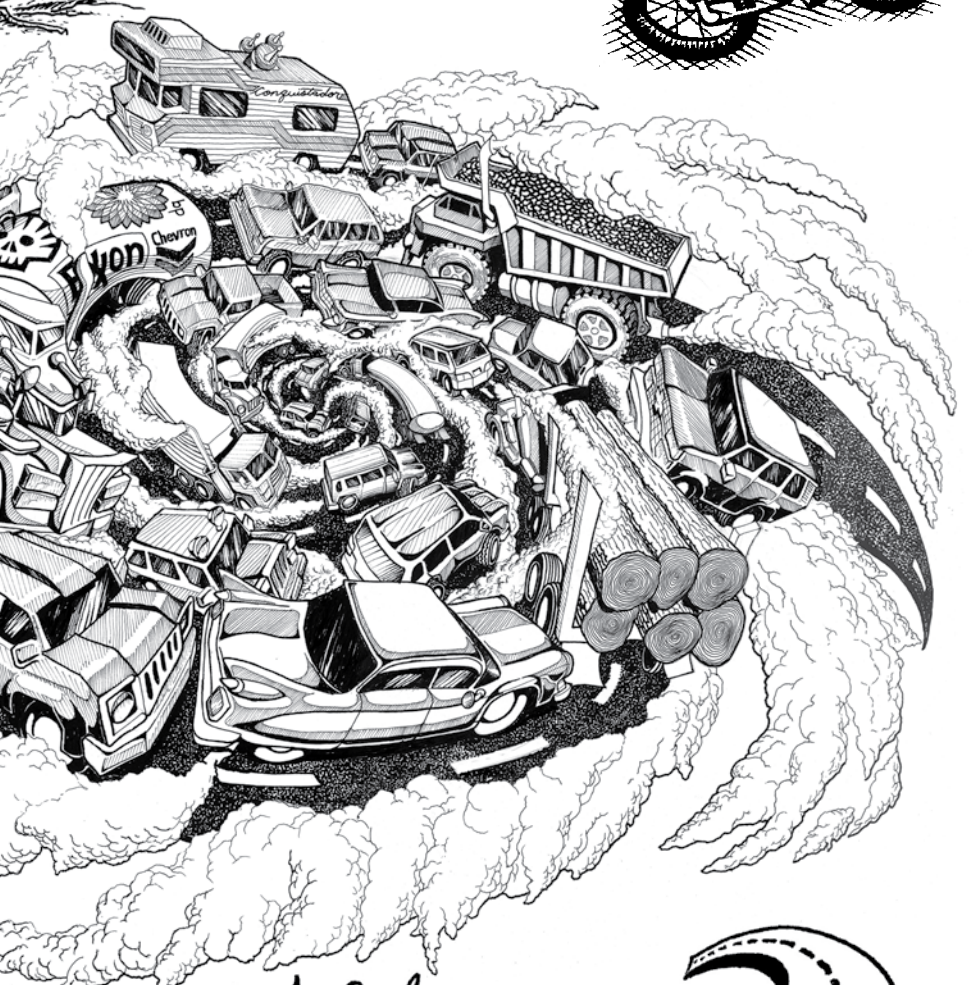

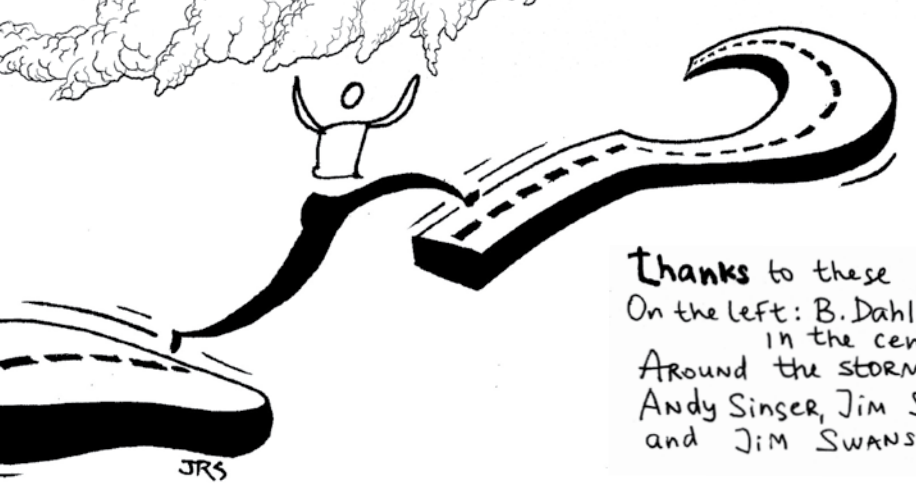

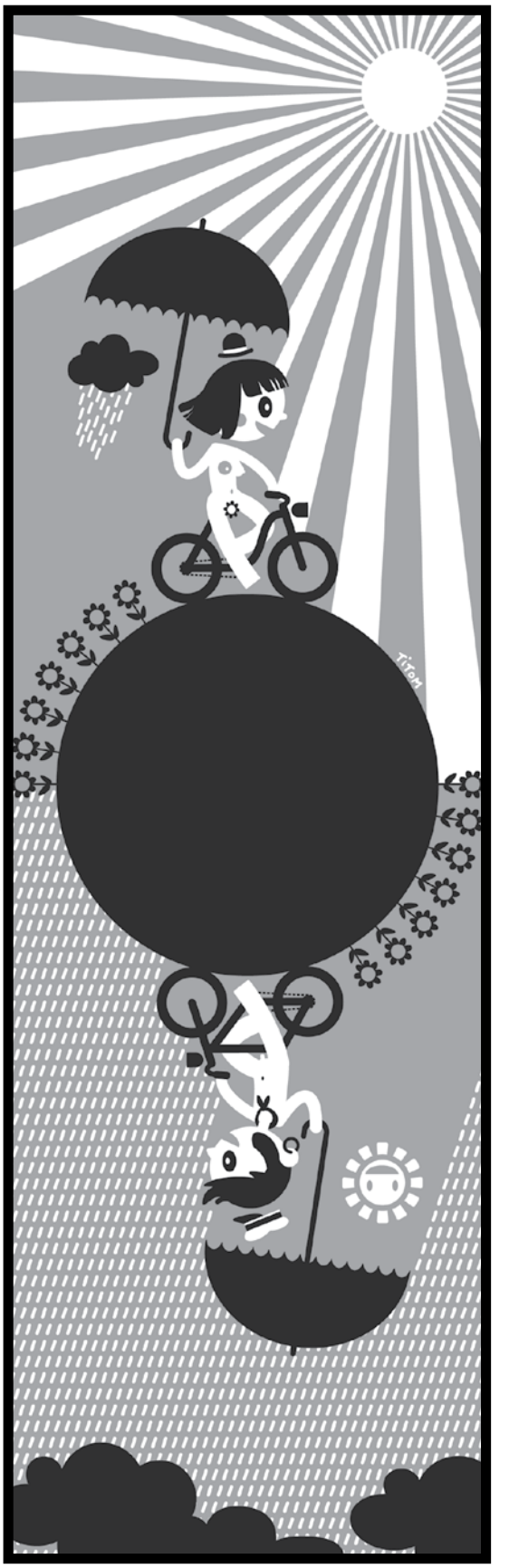

Thanks to these great artists:
On the left: B. Dahl, on the right: TiTOM
In the centre: Beehive Design Collective
Around the storm, clockwise from the left:
Andy Singer, Jim Swanson, Ken Avidor, Andy Singer
and Jim Swanson.

■ by Tim Woods

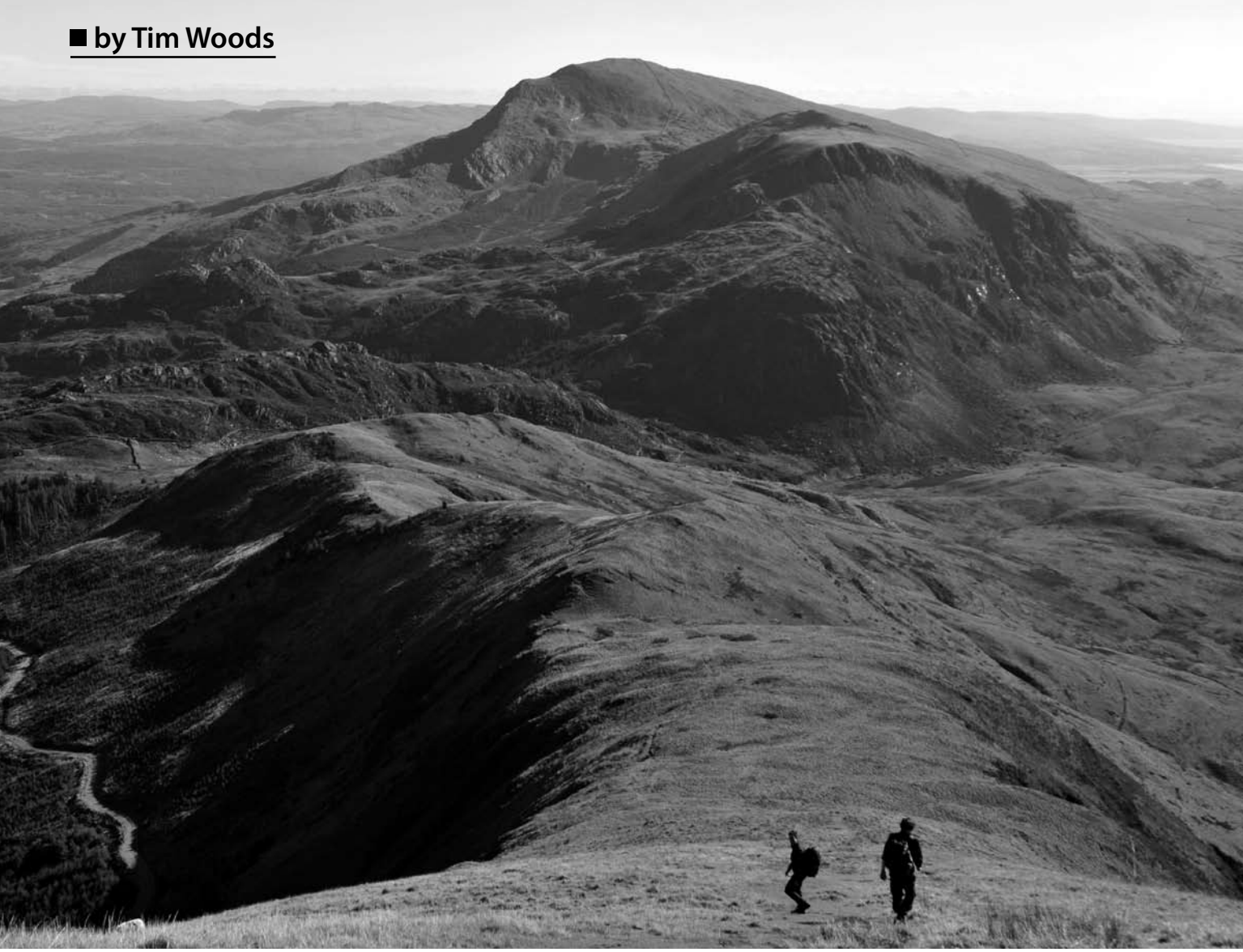

image © **www.lauracrow.co.uk**

Take the Boots, Leave the Car

Walking is carfree. So what's "Carfree Walking" all about you may ask? Carfree walking started as movement in the UK, aiming to encourage people who take recreational walks to use public transport instead of a car to get to the place they want to walk. Tim Woods from* Car Free Walks*, a UK website offering guides and promoting walks which are accessible via public transport, explains how easy it is to escape the city without a car and find a walking adventure. Woods outlines the benefits of carfree walking for the environment and for people's health, as well as the support it gives to public transportation in rural areas.

What is your favourite walk? Which one gets you reaching instinctively for your boots and rucksack? Perhaps an exhilarating hike up an Alpine peak, or a coastal stroll spent gazing out to sea. It is unlikely that you pictured an overflowing car park at the foot of your chosen hill, or extended the daydream to sitting in a traffic jam on the way home. But while more and more people are heading for the great outdoors, many of them use their cars to get there. The tranquil scenery that they seek is being increasingly invaded by the noise, fumes and eyesore of growing volumes of traffic.

The solution is simple: carfree walking. Many people are looking for ways to reduce their car use and using public transport to reach the destination of your chosen walk is a simple way to achieve this. Often people opt for the car by default without considering the public transport services available, especially in rural areas.

Promoting the use of public transport for recreational activities is a real opportunity for the carfree movement. Efforts to reduce car dependency often focus on urban areas, where the problems caused by cars are most obvious. Other worthwhile initiatives try to persuade people that "essential" car journeys – the commute to work, the school run – can be made using sustainable transport. But it is also important to encourage a change to our habits in leisure activities. Otherwise, that much sought after "breath of fresh air" will become increasingly hard to find.

Taking the Alternatives

The environmental benefits of carfree walking are obvious – reducing car use cuts CO2 emissions, lessening the effects of global climate change. But leaving the car at home

can improve the local environment as well; helping to keep rural areas pristine and not resembling our cities – it is hard to think of any stretch of countryside that is enhanced by having cars in it. Carfree walking also eases traffic congestion in popular walking areas, which can easily become overwhelmed with vehicles and inappropriate parking at the start of walks.

There are many other reasons to go for a carfree walk. Walking is an obvious way to get fit. The World Health Organisation claims that nearly 60% of adults do not take enough physical exercise and not taking the car provides a little bit more activity, even if it is just the walk to and from the bus station.

Carfree walking also supports rural transport services. In many countries, rural transport services are useful for walkers and a lifeline for people in the local community without a car. However many are underused and face a continual fight for survival. By using these services, walkers can play a vital role in helping to keep them sustainable.

However, there are limits to the possibilities for carfree walking. Not all walks can be reached by public transport, which puts them off limits to those of us without a car. Some people prefer to head into completely untouched wildernesses, where even train lines would be an intrusion to the pristine environment.

Walking Adventures

Despite the limitations, there are endless places across the world to get your boots muddy without firing up the ignition. The opportunity to complete a linear route is an attraction. Going for a walk can be an adventure, and few adventures involve going round in circles – Captain Cook would have ended up back in the UK with that approach.

The Tongariro Alpine Crossing, in the centre of New Zealand's North Island, sets the standard for carfree walking. A linear route across a dramatic volcanic landscape of deep craters and shimmering emerald lakes, it is hailed as the world's greatest one day walk (by New Zealanders at least). This awe-inspiring hike attracts thousands of walkers each year, and this unique environment benefits from the fact that most leave their cars behind.

Each morning, 14 locally run bus companies collect "trampers" (the local name for walkers) from nearby towns and drop them at the start of the route. After an unforgettable day exploring the otherworldly scenery (which doubled as Middle Earth in the *Lord of the Rings* films), buses running throughout the day collect the weary hordes 19.4km north of the start. This service is so efficient that few trampers, even locals, bother using their own vehicles – an impressive feat in a country where many depend on cars. It's the same set-up for all of New Zealand's Great Walks: Department of Conservation staff helps walkers to arrange shuttle buses to and from each route. This set up is an example to many other countries of how to keep popular walking areas as carfree as possible.

Many people use public transport to complete other famous long distance trails, such as the *Appalachian* Trail in the US and the hike to *Machu Picchu* in Peru. The distances involved, and the fact many walkers are from overseas (so often do not have a car with them), make this the logical approach.

image © **www.carfreewalks.org**

Take a Hike

Not every walk receives enough visitors to justify its own dedicated bus service, but walkers can often make use of existing public transport systems. In the UK, the scenery of places such as the Lake District and the Scottish Highlands attracts hikers from across the world. The rich railway history has left a legacy of rural stations, most of which are still in use and in areas where cars cannot reach – perfect for setting off away from the crowds.

The popularity of carfree walking is growing. Walking magazines and walking groups help promote carfree walking by including details of public transport services in route plans. At train and bus stations in many countries, walking poles, rucksacks and muddy footprints are becoming an increasingly common sight during people's leisure time. There may be some way to go, but it seems people are beginning to appreciate the joys of going for a carfree walk. ■

Finding a Green Walk

Traffic is a major problem in many parts of the UK's countryside and many places can resemble a motorway in the summer months. Car Free Walks was started in 2007 by two friends in response to growing frustrations about cars ruining our days in the hills. The trigger to take positive action was the advice given in many of our walking guidebooks. The writers almost always list places to park a car, working on the well-founded assumption that people always drive to the countryside. But the frustration was that many authors recommend train station car parks as a place to leave cars – without even suggesting the option of taking the train! Car Free Walks website has over 150 routes in the UK and helps you plan or recommend a carfree walk.
www.carfreewalks.org

For more information, please visit:
www.doc.govt.nz, www.ramblers.org.uk
www.healthwalks.co.uk

When Two Wheels Take Over Four

Interview with Chris Carlsson

by Jane Harding

In towns and cities all over the world, Critical Mass (CM) rides are marked on the calendars of many. Typically taking place once a month, cyclists and people on many forms of non-motorised wheels gather to tour the streets – drawing attention to how unfriendly the streets are and taking direct action against the dominance of cars. Chris Carlsson is credited as one of the founders of CM and is the editor of the book "Critical Mass: Bicycling's Defiant Celebration" released in 2002. In an interview with Carbusters, he explains how it all began, the movement's aims and evolution, and the importance of two wheels taking over from four.

Critical Mass rides are typically held once a month in over 300 cities around the world. Why do you think it is such a popular event?

The problem with many big cities across the world is they are totally dominated by capitalism and cars, which has resulted in many people not finding the time or having the social space to do things they want. But people are now looking for alternatives – new ways and safer places to travel. CM is a great public demonstration for this.

When the ride started I didn't imagine that it would become such an important public event. What I like about it is that you are always discovering new places, even if you think you know an area so well. When riding in the streets together there's a euphoria that takes over and the whole sense of the city changes. Most people enjoy this and want more. It is a great event to meet friends and have many interesting conversations, and an important social aspect of the ride is that new communities emerge in every city where it occurs.

"Critical Mass opens a door for people to think about space; how to use public space more effectively"

You helped launch the first CM in 1992 in San Francisco. What led you to this and how have you seen it evolve?

It's come along way since the 1990s. It began because there were so many frustrated citizens on the streets pushed to the side by cars. I got together with a group of people, we were talking about bicycles and politics for months, and from that informal process the idea emerged to meet up once a month and "ride home together" – filling the streets with bikes and thereby displacing cars. This monthly mass seizure of the streets has had a powerful effect in altering imaginations and creating political energy for deeper changes in city life.

We decided not to seek attention in the mass media. Our plan was never to talk to the media, but instead this ended up attracting more media interest. Our activity is rooted in face-to-face, direct experience. Of course that itself can become interesting to the mass media, especially if the participants are indifferent to such attention. Generally media coverage is predictable, misinformed and skewed to the

perspective of mainstream (car) culture. Only when they experience a ride do they portray the experience in a friendly light.

Which has been your most memorable ride?
Well that's a really difficult question because I've been on so many and they've all been so different. I've been on probably no less than 50 fantastic rides in San Francisco – it's a great city with so many enjoyable places to ride and so full of hills. But one of the very memorable rides was a big CM in Rome *(Ciemmona* in Italian) in 2008, where for three days we rode, ending at the beach on Sunday.

During this ride we entered the freeway and rode a long way before heading back into the centre of Rome and past the *Piazza del Popolo*. Another great ride was in New York City in July 2003, where more than 1,000 cyclists rode through Manhattan and across the Queensboro Bridge to end up at a big party. The weather was perfect and everyone was quite euphoric.

Is there a specific need for CM?
There is not one specific goal for all rides. They are demonstrations in different places for many different reasons. I think one of the important things to emphasise is that CM is not an instrumental event; that is to say, it has no further purpose than to exist. It is a chance for cyclists to meet in public, to reinhabit the city on a new basis, and to form relationships out of which new political initiatives might grow.

In San Francisco, where it first started, the ride does not have such a political culture right now, but there are about 1,500 participants in each ride. They come for all kinds of reasons, some to party, some to make an ecological statement, others to demonstrate the rights of cyclists to use the city streets. There is little advertising into this event, but we still attract new people to the rides, and of course there are always the old-timers who come along to nearly every ride. It's frustrating to me that there's not more political culture and xerocracy* and I look forward to it being more engaging politically someday.

What are the current challenges for CM?
One of our biggest challenges is to transmit the culture to new riders, explaining what we've learned over time and how the ride is better or worse, depending on internal dynamics, self-management of conflicts and so on. At one time we were very hands-on and would bring flyers to every ride, full of news and advice and suggested routes and themes. But nowadays there is little of that going on, the ride just happens, and everything about it is spontaneous and unpredictable. Which is fine, of course!

There are other issues the demonstration helps bring attention to, such as the need to build suitable bicycle infrastructure around cities, like more bike parks and lanes. But that's never been its "purpose". In San Francisco, there was a court injunction to stop all bicycle improvements, from bike lanes to parking racks. CM continued to ride throughout the two years since that injunction, and now city planners have decided to double the number of bike lanes. The local Bicycle Coalition spent a lot of time and energy organising pressure on local politicians and the bureaucracy to make those changes, and you could say CM helped by reminding everyone every month that there are a lot of cyclists out there.

Has the downturn in the world economy had an effect on CM?
Well, I don't think it has directly affected it because so many people are passionate about bicycles and this is not going to change. The downturn has certainly magnified the problems and what needs to be done – people want improvements to old systems of transportation, as well as new methods of transportation. In many countries

illustrations by | Jim Swanson

governments are promoting cycling much more, and many individuals are choosing cycling instead of using the car – a simple act making a change for the better.

How has CM influenced the transition towards more sustainable, carfree societies?
CM opens a door for people to think about space and how to use public space more effectively. I don't think it can change everything alone, but it is a step in the right direction. It helps shape the imagination of many people across the world to think of other possibilities for transportation – bicycling is a more sustainable method of getting around, and a social and fun alternative to the car. It is an important event – not only because of the use of bicycles, but because it changes people's way of thinking and perception of how they can use their public and social space.

What projects are you currently working on?
My current work is rooted in the ecological and social history of San Francisco, looking at how the choices made in the past shape our choices in the present. Some of that is transportation-related, but not all my work focuses on cycling or "carfree" activities.

What's your advice to someone starting a new CM?
The best advice I could give is that you can't do it by yourself. A group is what makes a CM. I would recommend asking yourself first, what are the reasons for your ride and from there you can find others who are interested for the same and other reasons. There are many websites that can give you useful advice on how to hold a CM, what works and what hasn't.

What do you predict for the future of CM?
That's a good question. I really don't know! CM has a really vibrant life, which is different from city to city. When it is suppressed, that tends to make people unhappy and frustrated, but when people are able to ride freely, new relationships and new thinking can develop. I think in big cities as well as in small towns it will continue to grow, as it helps improve quality of life. People all over the world join CM to make friends and make connections, and shape the way their city looks like. ■

Useful links: www.critical-mass.org, www.chriscarlsson.com

***Xerocracy**
Describes a form of anarchic organisation. The word was coined to describe the organisational principle of Critical Mass, and is used almost exclusively within this context. Critical Mass has no leadership and everybody is free to participate, and to reproduce the event. The lack of identifiable leadership makes it difficult for law enforcement to identify and punish organisers.

compiled by | Jane Harding

New and improved carfree innovations appear all the time. The possibilities for alternative transportation seem endless, particularly new bicycle designs, which range from the weird and wacky to the convenient and catchy. These technologies, concepts and projects offer a helping hand to the mobility needs of the existing carfree community, but also show car users that mobility can be just as easy, more cost-effective and fun without a car. Here we review some innovations to keep you walking, cycling and living completely carfree.

Futuristic Buggies

Welcome to the future! Born in Holland, the country of bicycles and tulips, this is the hottest gadget on the market for parents. The Taga, classed as a "multifunctional urban vehicle", has been designed to suit the demands of modern parents for a healthy and green lifestyle. The enticing urban vehicle is eye candy for every parent who leads a sustainable life.

While Taga isn't the first pedal-powered vehicle with space to load up the kiddies, this urban family bicycle is claimed to be safer, more cost-effective, more manoeuvrable and convenient, as well as more fun for riding with children than a traditional bicycle. It's actually a little like a "transformer" that can be converted from child-carrying tricycle to stroller in 20 seconds flat, so it adds a few new levels of convenience to the way you move your offspring around. Unfortunately the only thing that seems to be missing from these "safer" bikes in the promotional photos are the safety helmets themselves! **www.taga.nl**

Students, on your Bike!

Here's something to help get the average lazy student out of bed and onto eco-friendly transportation: having a folding bike in the house. Dahon, a producer of folding bikes, has teamed up with the UK's "Hive" student residence project, offering each apartment a Dahon Speed D7 folding bicycle to address the transport needs of residents. Hive ordered 425 bikes for its first two state-of-the-art student residences, which are scheduled to open in central London in September 2009.

The offer to lease eco-friendly urban transportation in the form of a folding bicycle complements the design of the Hive apartments themselves. The buildings come with a number of features to help reduce CO2 emissions, including grass roofs and a bio-mass boiler that heats the building by burning recycled wood chips.
www.dahon.com

Walk This Way

It's healthy, green and in fashion. Just how walkable is your neighbourhood? Walk Score helps people live a carfree lifestyle by measuring how walkable a place is – not just how pretty the area is for walking. The Walk Score uses data and mapping from Google Maps to provide coverage of the walkability of any address in the world. Although it only gives an approximation of walkability, Walk Score is still a useful tool to motivate people to get out and walk.

Walk Score shows amenities within walking distance – such as restaurants, shops, parks, schools or libraries – and awards points depending on the closeness of the amenity, with the most points awarded for those within 0.4km. Locations are scored within a range of 0 and 100: from the "Walkers' Paradise" where most errands can be accomplished on foot and many people get by without owning a car, to the "Car-Dependent" where there is virtually no neighbourhood destinations within walking range – the only place you can walk is from your house to your car. Perhaps it's time to move! **www.walkscore.com**

article by | Susan Vaughan

New Deal for Transport in the US

Happy Motoring?

US President Barack Obama has an unenviable task: helping reverse the current path of environmental destruction, and this involves transforming the way Americans travel. Obama's Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, does a good job of talking the talk about bicycling and walking as parts of this transformation, but have Obama and the US Congress started to walk the walk and really begun to change American transportation?

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American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Early in his administration Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) – a US$787 billion stimulus bill, US$48.2 billion of which will go towards transportation. Most of that – US$27.5 billion – is dedicated to highways and bridges. The rest gets distributed to various mass transit systems, with almost US$10 billion for state and local public transportation – but only capital projects.

Buried in the ARRA is the US$1 billion "Cash for Clunkers" programme in which car owners with vehicles that get 7.5km/ℓ or less can exchange their gas guzzlers for US$4,500 towards the purchase of a vehicle that gets at least 9km/ℓ. Some environmentalists, however, see this programme as a handout to automakers, rather than a serious way to tackle foreign oil dependence, climate change, or any one of the other dire problems associated with car dependence.

Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE)

In mid-May, the Obama administration announced new automobile fuel economy standards, the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE), which call for improvements of 5% every year – standards that will require that cars achieve 16.5km/ℓ and light trucks 13km/ℓ by 2016, 40% more efficient than cars are now. The new CAFE standards underscore the irrelevancy of the Cash for Clunkers programme, but have their own weaknesses: sport utility vehicles, or SUVs, those humongous gas guzzlers long the favourites of families, have always been classified as "light trucks". These new mandates also leave the American fleet at 1km/ℓ lower than the European fleet.

California Waiver

In June, the Obama administration reversed Bush administration policy by granting waivers long sought by California and 13 other states to set auto emission standards higher than national ones. Those emission standards will be higher for about two years – when the new national CAFE standards start to kick in.

The American Clean Energy and Security Act

Passed by the House of Representatives in June, the American Clean Energy and Security Act addresses greenhouse gas emissions from mobile sources, but it overrides the United States Clean Air Act by permitting the construction of new coal-fired power plants for up to a decade with no additional emission reduction requirements. According to *Auto Glass and Insurance Industry News*, if the bill passes, the US Secretary of Energy would have to create a large-scale plug-in programme and assist car manufacturers financially in their transition to producing electric vehicles.

Surface Transportation Bill

Work has begun on a half trillion-dollar reauthorisation of the 2005 Surface Transportation Bill. Currently the bill seeks to set aside nearly US$100 billion for public transit. However, in June the Obama administration announced its wish for an 18-month postponement, a decision that has been opposed by many. Jeff Mapes, news writer and author, surmises that Congress will have to raise taxes in order to pay for this bill and that perhaps the Obama administration is just not ready for it. "I do think Obama is interested in change", says Mapes. "But it's politically difficult to do… One can argue that the 18-month delay will give his transportation department time to craft a plan".

GM and Chrysler

Obama appointed a "car czar" to tackle the collapse of auto giants General Motors (GM) and Chrysler. Under this czar, American taxpayers have become majority owners of GM and are likely to end up contributing US$50 billion for its transformation into a leaner manufacturer of smaller, more fuel efficient cars with fewer dealerships. Meantime, Chrysler got US$6.6 billion from the government to finance its exit from bankruptcy and its sale to Fiat. Many more billions in taxpayer dollars are likely to be funnelled to GM's suppliers and financial supporters. In addition, now that Americans are majority owners of GM, congressmen and women are making efforts to keep dealerships in their own districts open.

GM and Chrysler "were both clearly failing enterprises and the bailouts were done just to… prevent massive numbers of unemployed [from hitting] the claims lines all at once", says James Howard Kunstler, author of *The Geography of Nowhere*. "I doubt that they will survive in any recognisable form … Personally, I think the whole Happy Motoring paradigm is in its death throes, though most Americans don't realise it", he adds.

Does Obama realise it? That is hard to say. If he does, he may not be politically in a position to say so, and he certainly has not been heard calling for similar fuel taxes as in Europe. ■

by J. H. Crawford

Taking the First Step

In the first article (*Carbusters #38*), we considered the basic principles of carfree conversion as they were established in the* Lyon Protocol. *We also reviewed the need for a long-term master plan to guide the conversion over a span of decades. This must include an expanded route system for public transport. In this issue we consider why implementation of carfree areas in existing cities must be phased and should proceed at a moderate pace. We also consider measures to reduce car traffic early in the conversion process.

Although many workers and residents will prefer to walk or cycle to their destinations, almost any carfree conversion demands some form of public transport for a portion of travel within the city. Some people are unable to walk any great distance, or even to move by wheelchair without assistance. Some trips are inconveniently long to cycle, especially in larger cities. And some people, myself included, do not enjoy cycling when the temperature is below freezing. We need frequent, reliable, comfortable service. The means are well known and can be experienced in many places, for instance in Switzerland.

If we accept the requirement for better public transport as a precondition for carfree conversions, then in most places we will have to wait while public transport is improved. This suggests that conversions should start at locations that are already relatively well served by bus or rail. In the early years, these areas will need car parking at the periphery. As public transport is improved, this need should disappear.

The Latin American experience with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) shows that these systems can be installed in just a few years. I believe BRT master plans should include long-term plans to replace the buses with trams, as buses are uncomfortable, expensive, noisy, and smelly. In cases where streets are very narrow, small trams can pass where a full-sized bus cannot. This is seen in quite a few places in Lisbon, Portugal.

As an aside, I have for years advocated the development of wireless trams. This would enable new surface-running tram routes to be built as quickly as BRT. All that is necessary is to lay the rails. Almost all new trams are low-floor, so the high-level boarding platforms that BRT requires are not needed. Low-level platforms are quick and cheap to construct. They have the smallest possible impact on the street. At the turn of the last century, tram systems were installed in hundreds of cities nearly overnight. We could do it again, especially if we no longer had to string overhead wires. The aesthetic improvement is considerable, and the cost of maintaining the wires is eliminated.

As discussed in the last issue, we should think in terms of rings of decreasingly strict limitations on vehicles as we move away from the central carfree areas. Not only will the diameter of these rings be increased over time, new carfree zones will be added as new public transport and cycling infrastructure are completed.

It will be nearly impossible to keep trucks out of the carfree area until a rail-based freight delivery system is in place. Dedicated systems will be difficult to install in existing cities, but we can use trams for most freight delivery, a practice that is more than a century old and which is enjoying a small resurgence in Europe. In any case, trucks should be restricted to limited hours, a practice now common in Europe. Load consolidation should be enforced. This eliminates the many nearly empty trucks entering the city and sends only fully loaded trucks in their place.

The governing principle is that an area can be made carfree as soon as good cycling infrastructure has been built, public transport is not farther than a five-minute walk away, and reasonable arrangements for freight delivery have been made. An important corollary is that the transport route system must permit reasonably easy, quick, and direct service to the important parts of the city. Transfers are the bane of rapid service. They cannot be avoided entirely, but an efficient route network and frequent service help to make them bearable.

Taming the Traffic

One trick that has already been quite widely employed is to make car travel so annoying that it is easier to walk, bike, or take public transport. Cities like Groningen in the Netherlands have divided the city centre into several zones. Private cars may not move directly from one zone to the next. They must go all the way out of the city, around the ring road, and back in. Buses, however, move freely between the zones, as do cyclists. Car traffic in the city centre is much reduced.

In similar fashion, streets can be rearranged so that there are fewer direct routes for cars. Implementation can be as simple as just putting some bollards, tables, and chairs into the middle of a housing block. This closes the street to through traffic and gives back some important space to local residents without immediately eliminating too much on-street parking (which is likely to give rise to fierce resistance if proposed). A vital measure is the completion of the network of walking and cycling paths, so that direct routes are established to all destinations. In contemporary North American sprawl, destinations that are quite nearby require long routes trips to reach them. This is no problem for car drivers but poses a real obstacle for pedestrians. A few simple paths can solve the problem.

More is required than just these measures. I believe that financial disincentives to urban driving should be implemented. These can be put in place without waiting for better public transport, and can be used to pay for it. External costs, such as air pollution and noise, should be charged and paid for by drivers. By some calculations, this will cause the price of fuel to increase by a factor of ten.

These changes will considerably disrupt people's lives, so the first increases should be small, with the full charge being implemented over a span of several years. (It has not always been done this way: London's congestion charge started at GBP5.00).

Parking fees should be increased immediately. Free parking should be eliminated, and all parking should be taxed. Again, rates should start rather low but planned and announced increases should encourage people to begin to change their transport behaviour. Experience in Europe shows that people will leave their cars at home if there are strong disincentives to driving and reasonable alternatives.

Changing our Streets

Other disincentives to driving are really incentives to use other modes. We must make the streets more beautiful, quieter, and more lively. We should encourage street food and street entertainment. As street space is reclaimed from cars, we must improve it. This labour-intensive work actually requires relatively little material. We want to remove parking meters, pavement markings, street signs, and the like. They can be replaced by planters, trees, benches and tables, convenient public toilets and drinking fountains, better light-duty pavement, and so forth. We need to fix the storm drains that trap bike wheels and fill the potholes that make riding rough. We will need more bike racks and more public-use bikes.

We can reset traffic signals to give shorter greens for cars, which means that pedestrians and cyclists will not be so long delayed. This has the secondary effect of reducing the capacity for car traffic. Intersections should be narrowed and the turning radius sharpened, so cars have to slow down and pedestrians and cyclists have a safer crossing.

We will need some car-sharing operations because travel to areas outside the city is not always possible by other modes. Experience has shown that car-sharing schemes encourage people to get rid of their own cars, which helps tremendously with parking. At the same time, the rather high fees for using a car discourage casual use.

Finally, I will plead again for what I call the "drag-and-drop bike". This just takes the white-bike programme one step farther. The bikes are free for anyone to use. There are no locks, no pin-passes, and no electronic release. You just grab the nearest bike and shove it in a rack when you're done. I suppose that kids needing some pocket money will move the bikes to where they are needed and ask for some loose change in return. The bikes themselves can be quite cheap as long as they are simple, single-speed bikes. Solid ones that never go flat would replace pneumatic tires.

We will strive to make a delightful environment that encourages people to give up their cars and walk, bike, or take transit. As we do this, the quality of social life on the street will improve dramatically. People will notice the difference and support the ongoing change to a city with fewer cars. One day the last one will be gone. ■

In the next issue, we will take up the need for better, fare-free public transport.
All images © J. H. Crawford.

Necessary Zoning

We will also need quick implementation of some zoning changes. An end to single-use zoning as practiced in the US for the past 70 years is essential. Any use should be permitted at in any location as long as it does not interfere with residential life. This change would reverse the concentration of retailers into a few massive stores located far from where most people live. Families who wanted to open a small retail business in their homes would have a presumptive right to do it. Families should be permitted to move into areas that were once reserved only for offices or stores. In this manner, we can bring goods and services back within walking distance of the places people live and work. This greatly reduces the need for mobility and saves people time. The big-box stores will wither away.

A Future Without Cars

Interview with John Urry

To explore the future and its limitless possible outcomes is a very challenging exercise. However difficult, it is the main aim of Kingsley Dennis' and John Urry's new book* After the Car *(Polity Press, 2009), which draws many interesting paths of what may be different shapes of the future. After reading the book, the* Carbusters *team couldn't resist an interview with one of its authors, John Urry, professor of sociology at Lancaster University. Below, he presents us with the ideas he developed in the book and shares his fears and hopes for the future "after the car".

Do you consider the title of your book provoking?
Yes, it is meant to provoke. It is a kind of prediction that in this century cars as we know them will disappear. They could disappear in many ways, but two in particular are significant: either because there is the development of a post-car system or because of consequences of climate change, peak oil and so on, which could make current systems of transportation and communication difficult or impossible to sustain.

Do you think our societies are aware of this?
No, and I guess your readership would agree with that! There are a couple of reasons that explain this lack of awareness. First of all, it is because of the ways the car system was established: it became so taken for granted that it has passed under-examined. Another reason is that the kinds of changes that are proposed for the car system are generally a kind of technological fix. For example replacing the petroleum power-source of cars with another sort of power-source. This however leaves the system unchanged. It is a limited conception of futures.

Does this mean that electric cars or alternative fuels such as biofuel can't save the car system?
These solutions would probably not change anything, but I obviously can't be sure of my predictions. A part of the book is all about the difficulties of predictions and the significance of Donald Rumsfeld's "unknown unknowns" as well as "known unknowns." In particular, tipping points can be provoked by relatively small changes. My research, observations and other people's research indicate that simply thinking that we can save the whole system just by changing one of its elements seems a very limited conception of the possibility of change.

More than the car, your book studies the car system and the future of mobility in general. Could you shortly describe the main elements of the current car system?
It is based upon a car fuelled by petroleum, made of steel, weighing a ton or two, seating four people, and surrounded by the development of roads and a pervasive car culture, which reproduced a relatively unchanging system during the last century.

There are also many wide features of the car system, like the problem of urban sprawl, due to the separation of home from work, home from leisure and so on. Homes are significantly based on commuting patterns and the car became necessary to enable family life, friendship and a lot of work life to be reproduced. We develop in the book the major differences between sprawl and the idea of a compact city. Sprawl is in many ways a key component of the car system.

At the end of the book, you describe three scenarios: "local sustainability", "regional warlordism" and "digital networks of control". Do you think citizens can have an impact on the evolution of the car system? If so, how?
Yes, citizens can do a lot of things. They can vote for parties that promote one model or another, sign petitions, write letters and a lot of other citizen acts. But I also want to insist on the significance of experimentation. Many people around the world develop alternatives concerning transport systems and express themselves through associations, carfree days and others things to reclaim streets. It is important to insist on things happening at a small scale, which could come to be combined with other elements and generate what we call a "post-car" system.

What is your personal view of the carfree movement?
The carfree movement is obviously very important and interesting. One of the main challenges to the carfree movement in this book is the argument that certain kinds of flexible, personalised travel systems would be a necessary part of future travel systems, something current cars seem to provide – at least for those sitting in them.

You develop upon many experiences (transition towns, new urbanism…) happening nowadays. It seems that potential "solutions" can work mostly at a small scale…
Yes, they indeed mainly seem to operate in neighbourhoods, small towns, smaller cities or probably also on islands. What is the most important here is the role of "prototypes" or experiments. I think the basis of new potential systems is emerging and may replace old

systems, if there is a proliferation of experiments and models of alternative futures at a small scale – promoted and extended with, the use of media like the Internet.

Things done at a small scale can scale-up and there will be some societies at some point, which will come to eliminate the steel and petroleum car. That is the way alternative post-car systems will come to develop.

Do you think the current weight of neo-liberalism ideology over societies can be an obstacle to the development of potential alternatives?

It is interesting to mention that we wrote that book before the financial meltdown. We didn't really envisage the astonishing scale of financial turmoil and the ways in which over-financialisation has caused so many serious and significant problems.

The question of finding finance for the development of some alternatives becomes therefore problematic. However one strong contemporary current idea is the so-called "green new deal". It can be a possible basis of supporting, funding and encouraging different sets of development. I am not only thinking of Obama's "green new deal", but more of something that would happen in smaller countries. It would of course have to be a mixture of private and public funding, regulation and resources, and it would be for sure a clever way to put the large number of unemployed car workers back to work constructing and developing a post-car system.

Do you agree that your book is a little pessimistic at the end?

I think it is indeed quite a pessimistic book, because I suggest that the 20th century involved this incredible scale of movement based on oil consumption. Oil is running out and its use has a strong implication in climate change. The 21st century has a limited set of alternatives. None of the scenarios we set in the last chapter are great – they all have costs and may involve a reduction of personal freedom because of the way movements will be monitored, regulated and controlled. The 21st century's challenge will be to make the best of a bad job.

What are your expectations for this book?

I want to promote the idea that travel is a question of systems, much more than a question of individual choices. Secondly, I hope to get policy makers to think of things that might drive societies in one direction rather than another.

Therefore I will participate in conferences and various events. I will also have the occasion to speak to car manufacturers about some of these issues, although I think some will not be particularly interested. It may well be that a post-car system will emerge unexpectedly, from left field. ■

book review

After the Car

By Kingsley Dennis and John Urry

Polity Press, 2009, 180 pp, ISBN 9780745644219

When we take a moment to look at our traffic-saturated cities, with cars parked everywhere, roads and freeways spreading like the arms of an octopus, and the government's blind support for the car industry, we are justified in asking how long this situation can last. It is high time to realise that we are closer and closer to radical changes in the car system. Kingsley Dennis and John Urry explore in their book what changes may occur, and develop potential paths for future transportation. According to them, the days of spontaneous "car get away" are numbered.

The 20th century was the "century of the car", instead of its "massive environmental resource use and an extraordinary scale of death and injuries". After explaining how "such a monster came to take over the world during the last century", Dennis and Urry demonstrate how, by necessity, the car system will sooner or later be "re-designed" and "re-engineered".

This unavoidable shift, they argue, is spurred by the current context of climate change, peak oil and the development of virtual worlds; it is the pressure they create that will modify the ways transport and energy systems evolve. In their book, "what is the key is not the car, but its system of connections." Dennis and Urry present different elements of this system and their relation, before focusing on new technologies, their perspectives and their dangers.

One great aspect of this book is that it manages to build some possible and realistic view of the future without neglecting its unpredictability. Its authors aim to "enact certain futures through developing particular kinds of analysis and not others".

Indeed, this well-documented demonstration leads Dennis and Urry to develop three different scenarios of what could happen: "local sustainability" (inspired by the model of "local sustainability" from E.F. Schumacher), "regional warlordism"(with over-protected rich enclaves and "wild zones") and "digital networks of control" (a scenario close to Orwells' *1984*). For the authors, "it is a limited set of choices that confronts societies in the early 21st century. And the reason for this constrained set of alternatives is, we argue, the 20th century."

The book keeps a very realistic look (tending to pessimism) at potential evolutions, but manages to keep a door open for brighter and more optimistic perspectives. It demonstrates potential benefits of a shift "from sprawl to small" (see *Carbusters* #38) and presents various innovative examples of urbanism like the Beddington Zero Energy Development (BedZED) in the UK or the future city of Dongtan, China...

"After the Car" is a very inspiring book that we would recommend to all people interested in the future of transportation systems – especially those convinced by the importance of carfree perspectives in building it. ■

BOOKS

ALICE IN UNDERLAND
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1999, 88 pages
US$10, EUR 7, £6, or CZK 180
A curious mixture of nonsense, social satire and surrealist fairytale, takes the classical Alice through the dreary landscape of suburban America.

CARFREE CITIES
J.H. Crawford, 2000, 324 pages
US$35, EUR 24, £20, or CZK 620
An unapologetic argument for carfree cities combined with a detailed and well thought-out plan, Carfree Cities outlines a city structure carefully designed to minimise environmental impact and maximise quality of life.

CARFREE DESIGN MANUAL
J.H. Crawford, 2008, 600 pages, hardcover
US$45, EUR 35, £27, or CZK 950
Carfree Design Manual starts from the urban planning principles established in *Carfree Cities* and shows how to design beautiful carfree districts that are places to build a satisfying and sustainable life.

PUBLIC SPACES - PUBLIC LIFE
Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, 1996, 96 pages
US$49, EUR 33, £30, or CZK 870
Describes the remarkable improvements in Copenhagen, capital of Denmark, over the past 34 years, and how they were accomplished.

END OF THE ROAD
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1991, 300 pages
US$10, EUR 7, £6, or CZK 180
There are half a billion cars on the planet, and this book takes a long, hard look at the contrast between the image and the reality of this fact. Zuckermann offers 33 "ways out" of our car dependence, including pedestrianisation, alternative transport, restructuring public transport.

FAMILY MOUSE BEHIND THE WHEEL
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1992, 30 pages, hardcover
US$10, EUR 7, £6, or CZK 180
Colourful illustrated book that teaches children the problems of car culture through the eyes of a family of mice who decide to buy a car, with all the consequences.

LIFE BETWEEN BUILDINGS
Jan Gehl, 2001, 202 pages
US$40, EUR 27, £24, or CZK 720
First published in 1971, this book is still the best source for understanding how people use urban public spaces. *Life Between Buildings* is the undisputed introduction to the interplay between design and social life.

NEW CITY SPACES
Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzoe, 2001, 263 pages
US$60, EUR 41, £36, or CZK 1,070 [hardcover]
This book highlights 39 public spaces around the world that have been won back from traffic.

CAR SICK
Lynn Sloman, 2006, 192 pages
US$29, EUR 20, £18, or CZK 520
"Cars cause environmental destruction, provoke stress and tear the heart out of communities. *Car Sick* provides a page-turning account of how we got into this mess, and more importantly, charts an attractive way out." - T. Juniper, Friends of the Earth

THE AGE OF THE BICYCLE
Miriam Webster, 1998, 270 pages
US$15, EUR 10, £9, or CZK 270
"What if one afternoon all the cars in the world slowed down and then stopped in their tracks... soon tea shops burgeoned on the interstates... rush-hour traffic went by on bicycles at an average speed of eight miles an hour..."

CARTOONS / DVD

CARtoons
Andy Singer, 2001, 100 pages
Book: US$10, EUR 7, £6, or CZK 180
CD-ROM: US$5, EUR 3.50, £3, or CZK 90
Optional CD-ROM contains high-resolution TIF images of all graphics
A personal and provocative look at our relationship with the car. Available in Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish.

ROADKILL BILL [Special Offer!]
Ken Avidor, 2001, 108 pages
US$7, EUR 4.5, £4, or CZK 105
It's the comic strip that looks at cars, technology and philosophy from the viewpoint of a frequently squashed rodent. Avidor gives voice to the suffering soul of humanity that feels bulldozed and paved over by industrial technology run amok.
Half-price discount: when you buy ten or more *Roadkill Bill*.

CARAVAN/PRAGUE
2007, 76 min., DVD, US$20, EUR 13, CZK 320
A bicycle caravan travels across Europe to shut down the annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank.

SOURCE*
2005, 77 min., DVD, region-free PAL (plays on all PCs) - US$25, EUR 17, £15, or CZK 450
The tale of the Baku-Ceyhan-Tbilisi pipeline is a tale of corruption and greed into the oil-soaked shores of the Caspian Sea.

STILL WE RIDE!
In Tandem Productions, 2005, 37 min., DVD
US$20, EUR 14, £12, or CZK 360
The shocking showdown between the monthly Critical Mass bike ride and New York City police in August 2004.

CARBUSTERS MAGAZINE

MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTION
5 or more copies: US$3.20 / EUR 2.60 / £2 / CZK 32 per copy (you sell at current issue price and keep the difference).

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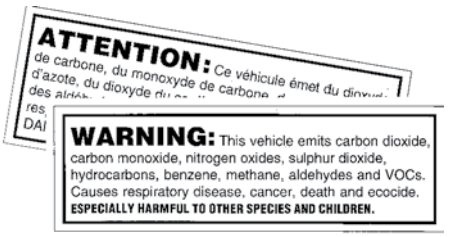
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ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF LIVING.
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For members only, we are providing some of our most popular Resource Centre items for you to sell or to give away at your World Carfree Day events, at a reduced price. Our past experience has indicated that these carfree treats are a super way to reach out to the public and to earn a penny or two for your organisation by reselling them! To make sure that we have all the items you desire on stock, please email orders@worldcarfree.net before placing an order as soon as possible. This year we propose you the following items at a discounted price

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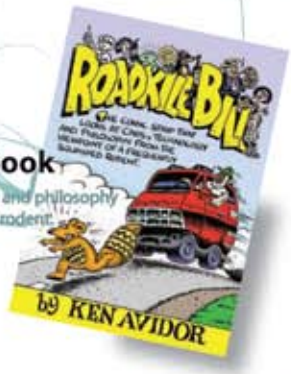

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The stickers are sized for bike frames and water-resistant.
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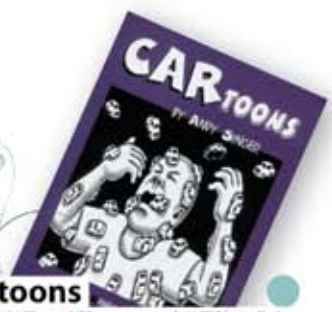

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"time for a change of scene"